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FAITH AND PRACTICE;

OR,

AN EXPOSITION OF THE LEADING PRINCIPLES AND CORRESPONDING DUTIES

OF

NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION,

AND OF THE

REACTION OF THE PRACTICE ON ITS PRINCIPLES.

A TREATISE

CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR POPULAR USE.

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"Is vertitur ordo."—VIRG.

"In this theatre of man's life, God and angels only should be lookers on: contemplation and action ought ever to be united."—BACON.

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PREFACE.

THE general plan of the following treatise is sufficiently laid down in the first chapter, or may be readily collected from the table of contents. I may here say, however, that its leading design is, to state as correctly and plainly as possible, both the evidences of the Divine power, and wisdom, and goodness which are disclosed in creation, and also the strict connection of all true religion with the practice which it requires, together with the reaction of that practice itself on its own principle. In the following out this design, it will moreover be necessary to state clearly and fully the coincidences between the religion of nature, and the religion of Christ. These two religions, so far as they can be said to be two, coincide in everything. They differ only as they are, the one a more general, and the other a more particular, expression of our dependence on that universal Providence which governs the universe by one law, and meet and harmonise altogether. It could not be otherwise. The one God of both is only one. He is eternal, infinite, immutable. Known unto him are all his works from the foundation of the world, and no thought of his

can be hindered. On this point, however, nothing needs to be added to what is said in pages 34, 35, and by the writers to whom I there refer. I will only observe further, that this principle itself is not the less true, or the less important, because rash conclusions have been sometimes derived from it. On the contrary there is almost always some great and valuable truth at the root of even those errors themselves, into which minds of at once great powers and great goodness have been apt to fall; and it is the due of even the most imprudent expositors of what has been called the Necessitarian hypothesis, to observe that their error is not in laying down in the most unqualified terms the doctrine of the eternity or unchangeableness of the divine law, but in deducing inferences from this doctrine, which our own human inability to comprehend the infinite ought to preclude.

All is law, but not the less, as I shall show more particularly in Chapter XIV. of this treatise, all is Providence also; and I moreover think that "the manifestations of immense power, wisdom, and goodness in creation," do "give a positive signification to the conception of the infinite,"* and that valuable inferences may be derivable from this position. Neither yet do I venture to confine even the human philosophy of the Infinite to the consequences of this one

* Thompson's Christian Theism, vol. i. pp. 282, 283.

truth. But in a treatise chiefly intended for popular use, I forbear to enter into any region of confessedly difficult, and often confused, metaphysics; and therefore limit myself to those obvious proofs or exhibitions of God's attributes, which our observation of the nature which he has created, and our interpretation of the revelation which he has vouchsafed to us, clearly supply.*

* The only objection which I need here anticipate to the mode which I adopt in drawing out this argument in the following pages, is, that I exclude too absolutely all evidence of the Divine existence and character, except that which is derived from the marks of design in creation. Paley's admirable work on Natural Theology has often been censured on the same ground. But to this it is to be answered, that even the argument *à priori*, as it is called, assumes, as Cudworth and many other writers have observed, and as the present Bishop of Ely has clearly re-stated (Natural Theology Considered, pp. 239, &c.), the *existence of a something*, and that the very next step to this assumption, and without taking which step it yields no inference, is from the analogy of design. If it be asked how it can be possible to infer design, unless we first see the marks of adaptation, I answer that we always do see these marks, wherever we have the means of discovering them, and that it is a legitimate and also a spontaneous conclusion from the facts before us, that if, in proportion to our knowledge and means of investigation, we find in all instances the marks of mind, of cause, and contrivance, opening themselves out, even though an ignorant glance cannot discern anything of them at first sight, the same or similar marks exist also, although often latent, in all other instances whatsoever. If we find these marks wherever we look, or are able to look for them, we presume them everywhere. Any formless mass of

For the same reason, or for the sake of avoiding, as far as possible, all difficult or recondite investigation, I abstain, in enumerating the manifestations of design in creation, from entering on those particular evidences of it which the human mind presents in itself. Of course I recognize both the value and the surpassing dignity of these evidences;* but in this short book I prefer to confine myself on this point to those more obvious features of God's great works which are not

decayed vegetables, from which we at first recoil with disgust, is found on examination to be the skilfully-designed and fertilising product of some of the most wonderful exertions of the Divine hand. Hence, accordingly, or from the analogies thus collected, analogies which are universal as far as we can follow them, we learn that nothing is causeless; and thus the recognition or presumption of an effect designed always comes to be mixed up inextricably with that of the cause which produces it. Thus, in the case which has been here adduced, the ignorant child, who knows nothing of the vegetable deposit except that it exists, is not less nor less reasonably apt to draw this conclusion, than the skilful gardener who can analyse its composition. But why does he draw it? Because, though not in this instance, he sees design in other instances. Everything which he does know has a cause, and is made with design, and, therefore, he assumes a cause for everything. Thus, inalienable, as it seems to me, is the argument for a causer of everything which exists, from that of the contrivance which all existence displays; and not less, if we come to a minute sifting of the case, in the example of the stone which Paley's happy illustration supposes us to meet with in crossing a heath, than in any other example which can be found.

* See pp. 80, 81.

less cognizable by the eye than the understanding. Few topics, however, can better reward a patient inquiry than the tracing out in detail the various combinations of the intellectual faculties with each other, of conscience with reason, of hope with fear, of the impulse of curiosity with the desire of communicating knowledge, and indeed of all the affections and sympathies of that whole mental and moral constitution with which we are framed. Neither yet can any study bring forward more impressive evidences than may be thus derived of the thoughtful wisdom and goodness of the Almighty Father of the creation itself.*

* See the present Bishop of Ely's Natural Theology Considered, pp. 71–77.

Langton, Oct. 3, 1855.

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FAITH AND PRACTICE.

CHAPTER I.

That these two great objects of life and religion combine intimately as cause and effect, and ought to be inseparable, and act and re-act on each other.

THE moral end of all religion is always to connect those doctrines concerning Almighty God which it most imports us to know with the conduct which they require. An honest faith, if it be anything more than a mere dream, or theory, is always, or almost always, seen and acknowledged to be valueless without the practice which follows from it. And yet the strictness and closeness of this connection or combination between our belief itself and what ought to be its consequences, or between what we think and what we do, often requires to be explained and illustrated. The whole case, if stated very generally, is as follows:—

Faith or belief in God, and in God's goodness, justice, and holiness, takes up, if full and correct, and

if made that principle which it rationally ought to be, a hold of the mind, which carries along with it, as matter of course, or with a strictness which I do not scruple to call a necessity, the discharge of all the duties which we owe to him. If a man be once convinced, or thoroughly persuaded of anything, whether of truth itself, or of what he supposes to be truth, the action then follows with all the certainty and energy, which reason gives, or can give. The law of virtue, and the law of vice, if indeed any such law as that of vice can be said to exist, move in this respect, though in this only, on the same spring. If the sensualist be thoroughly convinced that it is for his real happiness to pursue or to attain some forbidden object of sense, he then acts not less consistently in setting to work to obtain it, than the Christian acts in obeying in all things that true faith, which teaches him to subdue all sinful affections, and seek an immortal crown in heaven. The reason why faith is so often one thing, and practice another, is, that faith even in the truth is but seldom in our weak nature that full persuasion or conviction of mind which will dare, or suffer, or do, all things, even for God. Some exorbitance of human affection, or some weakness of resolution, comes in our way even when we see our duty, and know it to be also our interest, to prevent us from doing it.* . . . .

* Interdum enim scimus, nec attendimus. Non docet admonitio, sed advertit, sed excitat, sed memoriam continet, nec pa-

And the reason why the faith of the Christian martyr is always strong and often cheerful, and the faith of the voluptuary weak and vacillating, in even that sensual good to which he gives himself up, is, that the faith of the one is armed by the truth, and that of the other variously undermined, undermined partly by the knowledge that he is doing wrong. He is intellectually a coward, though his temper is obstinate. He is shaken by the consciousness that he is not pursuing his real happiness on the whole, and by the feeling that he is running counter both to his duty to God, and to those best sympathies of mankind in which in all his own better moments he would most wish to partake. That reasonable and religious work, on the other hand, though it may be sometimes a work of suffering, which is given to the truth, to truth about which we have no misgiving, and to which we have a divine Friend for our guide, perfects the faith from which it proceeds,

titur elabi. Pleraque ante oculos posita transimus. Admonere genus adhortandi est. Sæpe animus etiam aperta dissimulat. Inquirenda est itaque illi notitia rerum notissimarum. (Senecæ Op. ed. Schotti, vol. i. Epist. I., xciv. p. 775.) I copy the following sentences from Butler's Analogy, pt. 1, ch. iv. p. 109 [8vo, 1740]. "Some appear to be blinded and deceived by inordinate passion in their worldly concerns as much as in religion. Others are not deceived, but as it were forcibly carried away by the like passions against their better judgment, and to make resolutions too of acting better."—See the whole context.

and so establishes it in real operation as the leading impulse of our frame.

Faith and Practice therefore, when true and perfect, may thus be said to be in fact one. But though thus far in theory one, a grievous discrepancy is too often found to subsist between the act and the theory. And one great reason why this discrepancy exists is, that even good men, men undoubtedly convinced both of the duty of virtue and the reasonableness of their faith, yet do not bind them together as they ought to do in their actual contemplations on life and religion. Faith is a habit of mind, is the mental contemplation of things unseen which yet have real existence; and it is this habit of mind and affection, not any of the mere acts to which it propels, which brings us to God. It therefore is but to be expected that many who see this truth strongly, and fully, and receive it honestly, concentrate themselves in it too much. This Faith is all in all; and without this we are nothing. And so far, if we interpret this sentence rightly, is doubtless true. But then, if the attention stop, or satisfy itself, in this sort of general speech; or if it fail to spread itself out into that whole sphere of practical duty which this "all in all" rightly understood will be found to contain; the real truth of the maxim itself will be seen to evaporate. If we allow the true principle that all virtue resides in the mind to be either enervated by the dreams of the mystic or quietist, or

polluted by any imagination that a true principle will not be vitiated by tolerating the habits and seductions of a sinful life, the mournful evils which these great errors sanction or originate are of the very deepest dye. I may also add that they are so confessed to be by all sincere religionists, by whatever name they are called, or by whatever differences in expounding the doctrines of their religion they may be distinguished from one another. That it must be one great remedy for these errors to join together as inseparably as possible the cause and the consequence, to bring home to the attention, as well as to prove by logical process, or by authority, that the faith involves the practice, and to do this, not only by putting forward this easy truth as a general rule, but also by pursuing it into particulars,—is too plain to be argued.

And so also it would be if, instead of beginning with our faith in God as our original principle, we were to begin to examine the requirements of human duty in reference to those common habits of conduct or practice in which we, in fact, grow up. We doubtless grow up in a corrupt world, and our conduct in it, both from the opening of our mortal existence, and during our whole progress in it, is chiefly governed by the sympathies which our education leads us to contract or inherit. These sympathies are not naturally evil: on the contrary, it is among the provisions of the wise and kind Author of our nature

itself, that the selfish principle of it is restrained and improved by the social. It is a common observation that people judge on better principles than those on which they act. They act, perhaps, on the letter of some written code, of which they disguise from themselves the true meaning and spirit. But the dictates of sympathy are of a kindlier sort. Every child feels his own narrowness of spirit rebuked by the feeling of his schoolfellows, and that his own generosities are nourished by theirs; and it is a recognised maxim that in after life also the law of opinion creates everywhere a higher morality than that of the law. This morality is properly a morality of practice, and out of whatever principles the practice springs, and though the principles of religion have always their share, and may even have the chief share, in the forming of it, it yet exists independently of those declarations of the divine will, whether deduced from nature or disclosed by revelation, which teach directly the doctrine of God, and of his commands. This morality of practice, therefore, though checked, or stimulated, or originated, on higher principles, is yet a matter not so directly of divine, as it is of human, currency and obligation. It is also but an imperfect morality. It is too much limited to that narrower sense of the word in which the relations of man with man, and the rights, and accommodations, and facilities of human existence alone are comprised. Religion is not ex-

cluded by it. That is an exclusion which would shock our human feelings, not less than it would be in contradiction to all those specific lessons of our immediate relation to the Deity which almost all education impresses in some degree on all. But still a true and active morality requires always something more in reference to religion than that we do not exclude it. The whole experience of all ages and countries bears witness to the great truth, or rather to the great fact, that to make human life what it ought to be, to sustain the energy of conscience, to check its aberrations, and to elevate its scope, more, much more, is always wanted, than to leave its connection with religion to only that ruder sense or conception of its more essential elements, which is practically all but instinctive. The whole doctrine of God, and of his great love for mankind, and of a future state, is necessary to fasten closely on us all his commands, which are all our duties, as our direct motive for doing them. If we are in danger of temptation, and would have full strength to resist it, it is not enough to have been brought up in the undoubting recognition of the truth that our duty and our interest are all one in the end, or that God will more than recompense every sacrifice which we make to his will. We must bind up and unite, by continual reference and reiteration,* the rule

* See the quotation from Seneca, note, p. 3.

of God's law with the stimulants which are supplied by our knowledge of both his power and his other perfections; and we must also be thankful for all those express declarations and evidences of divine goodness, and for the specific authority, which the Author of revelation has brought to our aid. None of these helps will be too much for us, even in that straight road in which we might yet acknowledge without them that it imports us to go.

I will endeavour to show, therefore, in the following pages—First, what those direct relations are in which man is placed towards God, and in which our faith is based, and from which emanate all the duties which we owe to Him. And then, secondly, the great and correlative importance of these duties themselves. Except so far as our duties to God consist in direct piety, or in the direct recognition of his power and goodness, and other attributes, all the duties which we owe to Him are, in fact, identical with those duties to man, which would be our duties, even abstractedly from religion. All these duties are fast bound on us by the divine law. But then it is, moreover, a safeguard against errors of interpretation of that law itself, that they are also duties which the common sentiment of mankind, however formed, is found to exact, and with at least a very general unison of consent. Nothing, except religion, ever binds together even these human duties in perfection. Religion, moreover, not only

binds us to the practice of these duties, but also takes part in it. Both justice and charity, for example, as well as faith and resignation, may have not only religion for their motive, but ought also to have it as part of their rule. The just judge feels it as much required of him to set before his jury man's obligation to fear God, as to inculcate the human duty of keeping the peace; and in like manner the benevolent man is but of a very unenlightened benevolence who is not at least as studious to save his poor neighbour from vice, as to raise him from poverty.* Besides this, also, the practice of all virtue makes perfect, not only because it is the discharge of duties which religion prescribes, but also because it clears the atmosphere, or widens the horizon, of religion itself, and so tends to save us from much error in our discernment of the path in which it should teach us to go. I purpose, therefore, in the conclusion of this treatise to take up, though briefly, the consideration of both these great classes of human duties, and to show how they thus act, and re-act, the one on the other. The first in order, no doubt, of these duties, must be the discharge of the direct offices of religion itself, in whatever measure or form these offices may be practically useful to keep up the principle of religion itself. Next comes the duty of keeping this same

* See what will be further said on this subject in ch. xx.

principle of religion always in sight, or rather of never deserting it, while we are engaged in the discharge of all those moral offices of life, which either our natural or required position in it, or our personal and particular connections, or our human benevolence, exact as its rule. The *re-action* of this the moral life on the religious is not less certain or important than the *action* of the religious on the moral, and in fact constitutes much the more extensive field of operation of the two, though of course not the higher. Also if the moral re-action have not, or be not educated into, this directly religious nature, or quality, it cannot have that directly religious efficacy which we desire it to have; it still may have other uses, but it has not *that*.

Of course I have to lay down in the first place what those teachings are of religion itself, or of our relations to God, in which even our duties to man have, if not always their beginning, yet always their highest motive and end, and of which we must both know and feel the truth and value, before we can adequately either know, or will to obey them.*

* I may here be allowed to observe that, besides the error of severing religion and morality too much, there exists also an opposite error, and this often among very good men, of identifying them too closely and absolutely. "There is no true morality without religion." "No religion which does not make a man moral can be the true religion." These things, and such as these, we hear said perpetually. But hardly any language can

be more confused. The two principles, that of religion and that of morals, are no doubt much intertwined, and the more closely the better. It is a main object of the present treatise to show that this is the case. But, nevertheless, if we come to an analysis of principles, we must hold them to be separate. Religion is reference to God, morals to conscience. Louis XI. was in a real sense a religious man: and I see no reason to suppose that a man may not devote himself conscientiously to promote the good of his fellow-creatures, and yet be an atheist. The way to reconcile this confusion is, to show that a religion not promotive of morality is a religion not worth having, and that even the true religion is of no use to us, unless it have this effect; and also to show that a morality which does not inquire into the truths of religion on having the attention called to them, or which, those truths being admitted, does not take them in as an essential part of its own moral food or sustenance, must be a very imperfect morality. But I purpose to enter into this subject in some detail in ch. xx.

I will here add, however, that I suppose that almost every man who has ever mingled in what may be called common society must have witnessed instances of the mischief produced by denying to those many persons who do not carry out their religion into its proper effect the real possession of its true principle. This case may be embodied as follows:—A man of notoriously vicious or corrupt habits is spoken of. Some ill thing which he has done is made the subject of conversation. "Such a man as that," says one of the company, "can have no true religion." "Nay," answers another, "I give up his character as on the whole quite indefensible. And yet I know him, and know that he is not all bad. There is good feeling about him, and religious feeling too, and not only religious remorse for the course of life which he is leading, as likely to end in his eternal destruction, but also often a passionate though a fleeting sense of God's real mercy and goodness, and of thankfulness for the salvation given to the world, and offered

to himself. I allow that all this feeling can do him no good till he acts on it, till it has penetrated his mind and become fruitful. But still let us not disallow it to be what it is, and let us hope that the time will come when it will bear fruit."

There can scarcely be any one who does not see that this answer is, in the case supposed, the right answer; and one reason why it is the right answer is, that the disallowing it would encourage a belief, or suspicion, that a religion which leads its ignorant and bigoted partisans or assertors to deny what is known and seen to be true, may itself be false, or at the least very grossly misrepresented and misunderstood by its professors.

In the same manner, let us take a crusader, or an inquisitor, or a Mormonite. Many of these have, no doubt, been bad men, proud, sensual, tyrannous. Yet we do not deny them a perception of, or a sensibility to, the most benignant truths of religion, nor a pious willingness to peril their lives in its defence. There is, or was, a splendid monument in Ely Cathedral, in memory of a bishop who is said to have been possessed of all the Christian virtues in their highest degrees, and which particularises his charity, piety, and humility. "No, not humility," the epitaph goes on, "he had too much in him of the brave knight his father for that." The other Christian virtues, if humility be excluded, may be in themselves of little worth. But yet the principle still subsisted from which they flow.—See on this subject Butler's Sermon on 'the Character of Balaam, pp. 127–134.

CHAPTER II.

That our faith in God is faith in an infinitely powerful and wise and good, and it may be added, eternal Being, together with an outline of the argument from design, as stated by the Classical writers of antiquity.

ABSTRACTING barbarism, and abstracting Polytheism (if, indeed, there be any Barbarism not Polytheistic), it may be said that the elementary principle of all religion is, that the God in whom we believe, and on whom we depend, is a Being infinitely powerful and wise, and also eternal; and the only reason why I forbear for the present to affirm that infinite goodness is not less certainly or really a characteristic of God than infinite wisdom or power, is, that the difficulties which arise out of the existence of evil encumber this part of the proof. It is not less true, and assuredly it is not a truth of less importance to us, that God is good and just, than that he is wise and powerful. But yet it requires more proof, and for the reason which I have given.

This part of the case therefore, namely, that of the divine goodness, I will treat of by itself in a future chap-

ter,* premising only that the natural proof of the divine goodness, not less than of the other attributes, rests solely on the marks of design in creation, and on the analogies to the imperfect power and wisdom and goodness of man, which these marks obviously supply, and cannot rest on anything else.† To talk of the neces-

* Chapter vii.

† It may be thought that in this sentence, and indeed throughout this whole treatise, I extend too far the province of analogy, or at any rate the use of the word. A very recent writer, Mr. Thompson, to whom I have already referred in the Preface, observes that "it is not by an argument from analogy that man discovers mind in the designs of nature."—*Christian Theism*, vol. i. 307. Other metaphysicians, ancient and modern, say the same thing. "In his own notions," proceeds Mr. Thompson, "he is able to combine and compare the outward results, * * * * to know himself as a being who acts with intelligence, to know himself as mind or spirit. But he has no such personal consciousness of the intelligence of other men. He discovers them to be minds, as he is mind, only through outward observation, and has no immediate apperception of their inward thoughts. * * * * This knowledge, therefore, is not founded on analogy." But it appears to me that we do not extend too far the use of this word in extending it to our observation of other men, or in holding that a conduct which in them is similar to our own springs out of a like, or an "analogous" principle, and then in carrying on this very same principle into our reasonings concerning God. Of course we assume all through that connection between cause and effect, of which we can be personally conscious only in ourselves; but this, as it seems to me, is only one reason the more, both for retaining our confidence in the principle of analogy, and for persevering in the use of the

sity of a first cause, or to affirm of the universe either that it is eternal or that it cannot be eternal, or that God could or could not have excluded evil from the world which he has created, is to affirm of topics on which we can have no understanding of what we say. "There can be no effect without a cause." Doubtless, so far as our analogies go, there is not any. But when we have thus got back as far as it is in our power to go, we are baffled at once by every attempt which we make to go further. We only put in a tortoise to support the elephant, without comprehending any better what gives its place to the tortoise, than how the elephant can stand independently of him. Without at all travelling, however, into any of these speculative difficulties, or

word. I subjoin the following references:—Comparatio enim terrerorum ad Deum nulla est; sed infirmitas nostræ intelligentiæ cogit species quasdam ex inferioribus, tanquam superiorum indices quærere; ut rerum familiarium consuetudine admonente, ex sensus nostri conscientiâ, ad insoliti sensus opinionem educeremus. Pergimus itaque de Deo locuturi Dei verbis; sensum tamen nostrum rerum nostrarum specie imbuentes. Sanctus Hilarius, quoted in Bishop Brown's Divine Analogy, *p.* 86. Or see Aquinas, Summa, i. xiii. 1, 5, where this whole subject is stated, though of course in the scholastic language, very well and correctly. See also on this subject Archbishop King's Discourse on Predestination, section viii., which, I observe, is referred to with just approbation by Professor Powell, in his recent Treatise on the Unity of Worlds, note, p. 266. Compare, moreover, this same Treatise by Professor Powell, pp. 7, 14, 18, 19.

into what is called the Philosophy of the Infinite, our own human reason still allows us to affirm, and affirm positively, that nothing is too hard for the Lord, on the mere ground that we know so much as we do know, of what he does. He who holds the ocean in the hollow of his hand, and hangeth the earth upon nothing, possesses a power which we are certain extends a very long way, which must extend to much which we do not see, which is illimitable, and on which we may rely, whenever it speaks to us with authority.*

Thts reasoning, I may further observe, is by no means invalidated by the argument sometimes brought forward in explanation of the positive meaning supposed to be stamped on the word infinity when asserted of God; namely, that we do not mean by saying thai God can do all things, that he can work contradictions. It is allowed that if God is holy he cannot be unholy; if he make the fountain of light to reside in a sphere

* I copy the following sentence from the notes to Lord Brougham's Discourse on Natural Theology :—"When we see such stupendous exertions of power, upon a scale so vast as far to pass all our faculties of comprehension, and with a minuteness, at the same time, so absolute, that as we can on the one hand perceive nothing beyond its grasp, so we are, on the other hand, unable to find anything too minute to escape its notice, we are irresistibly led to conclude that there is nothing above, or below, such an Agent, and that nothing which we can conceive is impossible for such an intelligence."—Note V. on Mr. Hume's Sceptical writings, p. 261.

he cannot by the same act make it a cube; if God love virtue, he must hate vice. But then this explanation goes but a little way to remove the difficulty. For though we may say, and rightly say, that even the attribute of omnipotence is not to be supposed to possess the power of reconciling such flat contradictions as these, or rather of justifying us in making assertions at once contradictory and unintelligible, our power of affirming what are real contradictions is greatly limited. Many things may seem to be contradictions to us which are none to God. Much of our folly may be wisdom in Him. Much of our wisdom may be with Him folly; much that with us is necessity may be with Him choice. When once we get out of the range of positive knowledge it can scarcely be otherwise; and many of our own analogies, which, as I have said, are the only medium through which what we know of God is or can be conveyed to us, afford us a presumption that so it really is. The motions of the heavenly bodies, of which the real and wisely-designed are widely different from the apparent courses; the greater happiness derived from following the law of conscience than from committing ourselves to the impulse of appetite; or the advantage of studying the good of others rather than consulting only our own; are sufficient evidences that neither our imperfect knowledge, nor our imperfect morality, can always trust to first impressions or appearances. And the consequence is,

I think, manifest, that unless we see our whole case actually before us, or within our own orbit, and with that full knowledge which we can seldom have of all the circumstances which can effect our decision, we are incompetent to affirm anything whatever, either one way or another, with regard to the power of God. But then we *have* that full knowledge in almost all cases which affect any of our more important, and I believe in *all* which affect our moral, relations to him. The power which we see evidenced is infinite, or illimitable. There is no doubt of that. And then also the analogies of design which subsist between the works of the human, and the works of the divine hand, are too close to be sundered. If these analogies are sufficiently close, or if we may exclude all assignable ground for suspecting them, I apprehend that we may account of the conclusions which they furnish as certain conclusions. Undoubtedly, they are the only certainty which we can have. If these do not furnish us with it we can have none at all.*

* A sort of slur has been thrown, or seemed to be thrown at times, and by able writers, on the argument from analogy, on the ground that an analogy does not properly imply an actual *similarity* of mind or intention. An analogy is properly a likeness of *relations*, not of intention or character. The *relations* may be like or identical, but the character different. And so far is true. But then the intentions, or character, *are* like in all the analogies which we bring forward between the divine and human designs; and this likeness also is what

I proceed, therefore, to state what these conclusions are, though not at length, or with the least pretension to novelty. It would be a mere superfluity, it would be even to detract from the impression made by the evidence, to attempt to re-state an argument which has been stated not less clearly and convincingly by Socrates and Cicero, than by any later writers or reasoners. The discoveries of Kepler or of Newton have, in fact, added nothing to evidence which is not less demonstrable, perhaps, is even more demonstrable, in the wing of an insect, than in the revolutions of a planet, or the rays of the sun. The mass of all these facts goes for but little in the *proof* of our case. We have almost as much proof of God in little as in much. The scale is too strong one way to be turned to the other. The accumulation of the evidence serves merely to bring before the eye or the imagination the immensity or the variety with which God works, as a fertile topic of wonder, or as a stimulus to adore. Both these objects are, no doubt, great objects. I will content myself, however, in this treatise, and in speaking of the divine power and wisdom, to state the argument itself briefly, and almost in the words of those two great masters of heathen knowledge to whom I have referred; and I shall

makes these analogies *luciferous*.—See Law's notes on Archbishop King's Origin of Evil, pp. 66, 67, edition of 1781, and Berkeley's Alciphron, vol. i. pp. 245, 249, second edition.

do this the rather, because they had not that light of revelation to colour their reasoning, which flows both rightly and also unconsciously, into our own expression of it.

In the first place, then, I take the argument as stated by Xenophon, or, as I think we may here rather say, by Socrates himself, in the fourth chapter of the first book of the Memorabilia. He begins with observing that the life and energy infused into men and animals is, if it be the work of mind or design, a work far more admirable than any product of human art; as, for example, of poetry, painting, or statuary. He then observes that the evident utility of any contrivance proves it to be a work of design, and that the senses are such contrivances, and have a useful purpose in view; that the eyes are clearly made to see, and the ears to hear; that scents would not be of any use if we had not the nostril bestowed on us, and that we should have no perception of sweet or bitter, or of anything grateful to the taste, if the tongue had not been formed with the capability of appreciating the nature and difference of these qualities. "So again," he adds, "it is clearly the work of a Providence to protect the eye, a tender organ, by the door of the lid, which opens when we want to see anything, and which closes in sleep." The eyelashes and the eyebrows have also their respective uses, which are described particularly. The power of hearing which receives all

sounds, is not subject to exhaustion like that of the appetite.* The front teeth are in all animals made to cut, the back teeth to grind. The maternal instinct is a provision made by nature for bringing up the child. The instinctive love of life and fear of death are provisions or contrivances for perpetuating or sustaining the race of man. "If, moreover," it is added, "you are conscious of mind or design in yourself, ought you not to argue that there is mind of design also in the universe? How small a portion of the whole mass of matter is contained in the human body! How absurd to think, therefore, that all mind—that mind of which the nature is to communicate itself, is contained in ourselves! and that the immense and harmonious frame of all things can have come into being without it! We do not *see*, indeed, the Author and Governor of the universe; but neither do we *see* that soul and spirit of our own by which the acts of our bodies are produced and governed: and we may, therefore, with as much reason, deny that our own acts are the acts of mind or of will, as we can deny the agency of thought and will in the frame of the world."

Thus far Xenophon, to whom I refer, if any one can

* To this Cicero, in recapitulating Socrates' argument, adds, that it is a part of the divine wisdom of nature to have provided that sounds should have the power of awakening from sleep.—*De Naturâ Deorum*, ii. 57.

think it requisite, for further details.* Cicero argues in exactly the like manner, that if the works of nature are of a higher perfection than those of art, and yet art does nothing without design, so it must be also in nature. "How inconsistent, when we see a statue or a picture, to infer that it is the work of art or understanding; or when we see a ship in motion, to entertain no doubt but that its course is directed by the skill of a navigator; or when we see a dial, or a clock,† to understand that it marks the time not by chance but by contrivance, and yet not come to the same conclusion with regard to the world itself—a world inclusive both of these contrivances, and of their contrivers, and of all things else." "Our friend Posidonius," he adds, "has lately constructed a sphere [or orrery] in which he represents the revolutions of the sun, the moon, and the planets. But if any one were to carry this sphere into Scythia or Britain, not even the barbarians of those regions would entertain any doubt but that it was the work of design."‡

The admirable treatise from which this last paragraph is abstracted, contains, as I scarcely need add, many other not less remarkable passages to the same effect. I do not dare to say that even this great

* See the whole of the third chapter of Book iv., and particularly sections 13 and 14.

† The clepsydra. ‡ De Naturâ Deorum, ii. 34.

writer, able as he is, and of almost unrivalled eloquence, was not infected by the common error or imagination that even that mind of which he proves the existence may not have been so diffused throughout the universe as to merge in mechanism or fatality.

But though I will not say that the conviction of Cicero himself was altogether so single as it might have been, and as it ought to have been made by his own argument,* the strength of the argument itself, and the ability with which he has enforced it, is not on that account the less, and is quite decisive. The error into which he may have fallen, and which has survived him, namely, that of identifying reason, or mind, or God, with the universe, or the error of Pantheism, common as it has been in all ages, may yet be easily seen through on one moment's steady consideration. The only argument, at least from reason, for the existence of a divine mind, is in the analogies of the human. The watchmaker, the shipbuilder, the carpenter, are all of them minds. So also must be the maker of the world. That is the argument. There is no other.† But then they are also all of them persons. The same argument which holds good for the

* It is impossible to forget the painful incertitude disclosed in the last sentence of the De Naturâ Deorum :—Hæc cum essent dicta, ita discessimus, ut Velleio Cottæ disputatio verior, mihi Balbi *ad veritatis similitudinem videretur esse propensior.*

† P. 14, and note † *ibid.*

one point, holds also no less good in the other. Or if we say that the power to keep itself going is inherent in the machine itself, it is not on this account the less the power of a mechanist; and the mechanist of the world is God.* The whole case, therefore, of the de-

* Notwithstanding what I have thought it necessary here to say on the subject of the Heathen Pantheism, it appears to me but fair to subjoin that, as far as the charge of atheism goes, the Greek and Roman philosophers have often been hardly dealt with by modern writers. Doubtless Lucretius was an atheist. To argue that the eyes were not made to see with, nor the tongue to speak, nor the ears to hear (De Rerum Naturâ, iv. 830–840), is no doubt to carry atheism as far as it can go. The doctrine of the soul of the world is also a *suspicious* doctrine. It may be possible to imagine that the mass may be moved by an internal energy, and yet not by design. But Aristotle was no atheist. He held no doubt that the world was eternal. But then he held also that it had been informed and vivified from eternity by wise design; and there is not *any* intermediate ground to be taken between the holding that all is chance, which doubtless is flat Atheism, and the believing in the existence of design, which is Theism. See, in reference to Aristotle, Mosheim's remarks on Cudworth, book i. ch. iv. sect. 24, pp. 94, 95, of the English translation, and his observations on Origen in the Dissertation inserted in vol. iii. sect. 2, p. 143. See, also, Archbishop Sumner's Records of the Creation, vol. i. pp. 19, 193, 194, and his references to the preambles of the Laws of Zaleucus and Charondas, *ibid.* p. 75. Locke has entered at length into the same question in book iv. ch. x., but on this particular point of it, he does not advance beyond that "dim and seeming conception" at which he professes to aim. In the same manner with regard to the doctrine of a Chaos, we certainly have not any sufficient reason to pronounce that

sign and wisdom, and of the wonderful perfection also of the design and wisdom, manifested in the creation, is itself perfect and complete, and this even without stepping over the threshold of the early records, which have come down to us from Athens and Rome. I may still proceed, however, to some of the modern illustrations which the same argument has received, and which have, moreover, the merit of entering, though not into a more convincing statement, yet into a more exact anatomy of the case than seems to have been called for in earlier times.

there ever was any proper chaos at all, or that everything has not been *order* from the very first, if, indeed, we can speak of a *first* in such a matter as this. But still, even granting a chaos, we are not come to Atheism. Hanc *Deus*, et melior litem natura diremit.

CHAPTER III.

Of the proof to be derived from the mechanism of the solar system, and that of the universe.

THE very natural question has been suggested, and as we are told by Aristotle,* what the effect would be on a man who had been kept underground from the period of his birth, if he were to emerge at once both into the light of day and into the full possession of the mental faculties, and appreciation of sensible objects. Doubtless his astonishment would be extreme. Still more if we could imagine him never to have been taught anything about the sun, or the sky, or the sea, or the surface of the earth, or distance or space, and yet to possess the power of forming correct and vivid conceptions of the first impressions which they would make on his mind. Imagining all this, however, as well as we may, how grand would not that little fraction of the creation appear to him to which he might

* Præclare ergo Aristoteles; si essent, inquit, qui sub terrâ semper habitavissent, &c., &c.—*Cic. de Nat. Deorum*, ii. 37.

be thus introduced! The first impression would be little else than mere wonder. The wonder would, moreover, grow on him. The splendour of the sun, the magnificence of the daylight, the undefinable space by which he found himself separated from an interminable sky; then, as the hours passed on, the traverse of the sun through the heavens, and its sinking at last beneath the horizon; and then again afterwards the depth of that azure firmament of night by which the blaze of day was succeeded, and the brightness of the innumerable stars by which it was lighted up,—all this would, beyond all doubt, have an effect on the mind to which no gradual awakening of it can ever be compared.

That first effect, I have said, would, it is probable, be mere wonder, and would in great measure fade away, as the impression became habitual. But the ground of wonder is not less, because its cause is permanent, or because a rational explication of all these phænomena may at length be given. And this, moreover, is actually seen to be the case, if we only refer to the real process by which the human mind is always led, though not by so violent a plunge as has been here imagined, to search for their cause. Some cause it always does search for, and supposes itself to find, whether it be water, or attraction, or impulse, or a conglomeration of atoms, some merely superfluous or imaginary link to support a chain. But the true or

ultimate cause, as has been seen sufficiently in the preceding chapter, can only be God.

I proceed therefore to state, in the first place, some of the particulars of what God does in those most affecting and stupendous works of his power, in which he speaks in his loudest voice. I, of course, take out of the immense mass of the facts before us nothing but a selection, and this from the most accessible and received authorities which I can find.

To begin then with that system, or I should rather say that visible part of the system of the universe, to which our own planet belongs. The first impression, probably, which this great spectacle makes on the understanding, is, as may appear from what I have already said, that of its immensity, the immensity of our portion of it, as well as of the whole; the second impression is that of its regularity; and the third, the simplicity of that one principle of gravitation which extends through the whole.

To speak, in the first instance, of its immensity. The distance of the sun from the earth is ninety-five millions of miles; its diameter eight hundred and eighty-two thousand miles; in linear magnitude it exceeds the earth in the proportion of one hundred and eleven-and-a-half to one; and in bulk in that of one million three hundred and eighty-four thousand four hundred and seventy-two to one.* The linear

* Sir John Herschel's Outlines of Astronomy, sect. 358.

diameter of some of its spots is upwards of four thousand five hundred miles at least.* The distance of Uranus from the sun is about one thousand eight hundred millions of miles, and that of the planet Neptune has been calculated at two thousand seven hundred millions of miles;† the velocity of light is one hundred and ninety-two thousand miles in a second; and yet all these magnitudes and distances are still trifling, when compared with the distances of the fixed stars, as calculated by astronomers.

In a practical treatise on theology it is unnecessary to go further on any other such points as this. There is a sort of immensity in even the lowest of these multiples which gives it not less effect on the mind than is attained by the highest; and yet the effect may also be made to be greater still, if we consider that all this universe is always in motion, and moves with a regularity in comparison of which the regularity of the most perfect human mechanism altogether disappears. There is nothing which we can predict of the future, there is nothing which we can affirm of the past, with a certainty equal to that with which we rely on those astronomical computations which our observations and experience have allowed us to frame. The Asteroids and the planet Neptune have been discovered in our own age, because a voice—the voice

* Sir John Herschel's Outlines of Astronomy, sect. 386.

† Olmstead's Mechanism of the Heavens, 1850, p. 217.

of nature—had previously been heard teaching to look for them. The rotation of the earth is so invariable, as to make it impossible for a difference of $\frac{1}{100}$th of a second of time to have obtained between the length of the day in the earliest ages and at the present time.* And all this under the operation of that one and universal law of gravitation, by which not only our own system but the whole of the visible universe is seen to be governed; a law also which is itself adjusted and guided by a creative power and wisdom which has adapted it to the high office which it has to perform. Mere plain and obvious gravitation, such as we see it in our daily walk of earthly experience, might be supposed to be nothing more than the subsidence of heavy bodies to a common centre. But the gravitation of the universe upholds innumerable and vast spheres in a constant and rapid flight; all, as far as we know, without impinging one on another; all taking, as far as we observe, the same direction; all declaring the unity and immensity of the same Lord of the whole. So also in regard to that most remarkable relation which was discovered by Kepler between the distances of the planets from the sun and the periodic times of their revolutions. "Of all the laws," observes Sir John Herschel, "to which induction from pure observation has ever conducted man,

* La Place, as quoted in Whewell's Bridgwater Treatise, pp. 233, 234.

this third law, as it is called, of Kepler, may justly be considered as the most remarkable and the most pregnant with important consequences. When we contemplate the constituents of the planetary system from the point of view which this relation affords us, it is no longer mere analogy which strikes us—no longer a general resemblance among them, as individuals independent of each other, and circulating about the sun, each according to its own peculiar nature, and connected with it by its own peculiar tie. The resemblance is now perceived to be a true *family* likeness; they are bound up in one chain, interwoven in one web of mutual relation and harmonious agreement, subject to one pervading influence which extends from the centre to the furthest limits of that great system, of which all of them, the earth included, must henceforth be regarded as members."* But that family likeness is the likeness of the one creation; that pervading influence is the influence of the one divine presence and providence.

Such is the order of the divine system. But let us now ask, are there not any disorders in it? If there be, and if the disorders of such a vast system as this be left to chance or uncertainty, it may be but of little use that the originating power was so immense or the design so wise. Among the works of the

* Outlines of Astronomy, sect. 488.

human hands nothing is more terrifying, hardly anything else so mischievous, as the going wrong, or the running off into destruction, of some of those huge machineries which have been most wisely designed and skilfully executed. But a disorder in the system of the universe must be beyond all comparison more startling, and overwhelm the sufferer, whether he suffer from the apprehension of it, or from its real occurrence, with still greater dismay than anything else.

To this question, then, I answer, in the first place, that although there do exist what have been called perturbations of the planetary system, or of that of the universe, these perturbations themselves are still most properly to be accounted of as part of the system itself; and that the provisions made for correcting them, if this word may be used, are amongst the most remarkable of all the contrivances which it exhibits. Under the influence of the principle of gravitation, and this, coupled with the perpetual changes of position of the several planets in respect of each other, it is a physical necessity that various deviations in their orbits should be perpetually taking place. These deviations have also, in the earlier periods of astronomical science, seemed to require a periodical and external adjustment by the hand of the Creator himself. Even Newton did not undertake to affirm the stability of the system of which he was the

great demonstrator,* or that it would continue to go, if left to itself. It is observed by Stackhouse, who appears to copy from Stillingfleet and other writers, that since all things "were brought into being at first by the contrivance of God's wisdom, and the exercise of his power, they have not their existence in themselves, and must, therefore, depend on the same hand that gave it for its preservation; and that the subsistence of all beings which proceed from an infinite power depends upon a continual emanation of the same power; and when once this power is withdrawn, all those beings which were produced by it must needs relapse into nothing." Again, the same writer observes afterwards, that "the nature of matter and motion is such that they cannot serve the designs of their Creator without his assistance, and therefore he constantly does assist, according to a certain tenor which he hath prescribed to himself, but this tenor and course he sometimes alters upon great occasions."† It is remarked by Dr. J. Burnet, that "from the nature of gravitation and the concentricity of the orbits the irregularities produced are so slowly operated in contracting, dilating, and inclining those orbits, that the system may go on for many thousand years before any extraordinary interference becomes

* Whewell's Bridgwater Treatise, book ii. chap. iii. p. 163.

† Stackhouse's Body of Divinity, pp. 231, 243.

necessary to correct it."* It may not be necessary for many thousand years, but it must come at last. A multitude of other passages to the same effect may be easily found. But it has been proved by recent investigations that all these perturbations of the planetary system ought rather to be accounted of as *inequalities* than as real derangements; that they are only secular and periodical, and included within narrow limits; and that they only oscillate about a mean state, which they never desert.† And thus, as has been rightly observed by Archbishop Sumner, "by an obedience originally prescribed to this single and universal law of gravitation, not only the motions of the different bodies composing the system are regulated, but their aberrations and eccentricities are adjusted and corrected, and the permanence of the system itself is maintained equally free from variation, and from the necessity of interference to prevent variation."‡ Or, as the same writer observes a few pages afterwards, "The original mandate of eternal wisdom provided, as far as we can learn from physical researches, for a world of which we cannot foresee the

* Boyle's Lecture, ii. c. 78, as quoted in Lord Brougham's Essay on the Origin of Evil, pp. 58, 59.

† La Place, as quoted by Professor Whewell.—Ubi supra, p. 164. See, also, Sir John Herschel's Outlines of Astronomy, sect. 701.

‡ Records of the Creation, vol. ii. p. 8.

termination."* But this correction of the inequalities of a system is, if we may judge, as we must, from

* Records of the Creation, pp. 10, 11. "There is a mistake," says Paley, "concerning the idea which the term 'law' expresses in physics, wherever such an idea is made to take the place of power, and still more of an intelligent power, and as such to be assigned for the cause of anything, or of any property of anything that exists ..... A law presupposes an agent, for it is only the mode according to which an agent proceeds: it implies a power, for it is the order according to which that power acts. Without this agent, this power, which are both distinct from itself, the *law* does nothing, is nothing." "When we assert," says Doddridge, "a perpetual divine agency, we readily acknowledge that matters are so contrived as not to need a divine interposition in a different manner from that in which it had been constantly exerted. And it is most evident that an unremitting energy displayed in such circumstances, greatly exalts our idea of God, instead of depressing it; and, therefore, by the way, is so much the more likely to be true." "The term *law*," says Sir John Herschel, "expresses the *conditions of action* of the properties of matter. The Divine Creator of the universe has, by creating his materials, endued with certain fixed qualities and powers, impressed them in their origin with the *spirit*, not the *letter*, of his law, and made all their subsequent combinations and relations inevitable consequences of this first impression." These are well-known passages, but I should add that I here take them directly from the *Proofs* and *Illustrations* subjoined to the Vestiges of the Creation, pp. i. ii., tenth edition. I copy the following sentences from Mr. Wilson's able volume of Bampton Lectures, preached at Oxford in 1851:—"It is plain, from the whole history of human religion and of human philosophy, that in the uncultivated periods men have been prone to imagine in all that surrounds them, and happens to them, the

human analogies, a greater effort, and of a maturer wisdom, than the construction of a system which shall have no inequalities. One of the commonest and best

action of some power superior to themselves, operating specially and immediately on each separate occasion. As civilisation advances, the domain of the preternatural recedes, law is found to embrace continually more and more the exceptional, and the occasional is found to be less and less frequent; and at length the conviction rises clear and well defined, that in the divine creation all is subject to law, and that it argues no exalted conception of the Maker of all things, that he should be interposing, correcting, and adjusting defects in His own works. If all this appears very evident to us now, we should remember that to former generations, and to men in other conditions, it has been by no means evident; that with great difficulty, and through long periods of education, unless under highly-privileged circumstances, have men risen to the conception of one Supreme Being: and when this conception was attained, the more wonderful, imposing, or unusual events, even in the material world, were attributed to his special interposition. Even in the present age, ordinary persons do not readily recognise a Providence, at once general and particular, ordering all things both in heaven and in earth; and by the intervention of law, without special interposition, throwing up at their most proper seasons, as well the most rare phenomena as the most common," pp. 120, 121. See, also, the observations in pp. 29, 37 of Dr. Tulloch's recent work on Theism, on the impossibility of severing the principle of causation from that of *will*. The present Bishop of Ely speaks in exactly the same manner of its being "contrary to all our experience that anything should foresee and contrive except *mind*, that is, an intelligent being, exercising volition, and possessing power."—*Natural Theology Considered*, p. 37; and see pp. 34,

illustrations, both ancient and modern,* for the existence of a God, or of design in creation, is derived from the analogy of a watch; and watches are made which shall wind themselves up. But to provide for the correction of inequalities or irregularities is more than the making a watch which shall wind itself up. It is like the making a watch which shall regulate its own movements, after having gone too fast or too slow. It is also well worth remarking, that many and able writers who lived before this proof had been thus made out, appear to have anticipated it in the moral impression made on their minds by the unity and perfection of all those works of the creation which they did see and comprehend. "There is a common notion in the world," says Bishop Burnet,† "that things would fall back into nothing of themselves, if they were not preserved by the same infinite power that made them . . . . But whatever had once a being must of its nature continue still to be without any new causality or influence." I do not quote this sentence for its argument's sake, which, especially on referring to the whole context, will, I think, be seen to be faulty; but solely to show the *sentiment* of an

35. See, also, Paley's chapter on the Personality of the Deity; and Professor Powell's Essay on the Theory of Causation, p. 118.

* See the reference to Cicero, in p. 22.

† On the first article, p. 37, eighth edition, 1759.

able and candid mind on the subject in question. Clarke, in his Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, holds the same language.* So also Wollaston, "Where there are any seeming variations in nature, they proceed only from the different circumstances and combinations of things acting all the while under the ancient laws."† And this is the general or leading principle of his able book. It is,

* It is moreover to be observed that this most able writer urges to this effect not only the *à priori* argument, on which ground he of course speaks decisively that God "can no more be prevented by force or opposition, than he can be hindered by error or mistake, from effecting always what is absolutely fitest and wisest;" but the *à posteriori* argument also. "The older the world grows, and the deeper men inquire into these things, and the more accurate observations they make, and the more and greater discoveries they find out, the stronger this argument continually grows." "How would [Epicurus and Lucretius] have been ashamed if they had lived in these days, when those very things which they thought to be faults and blunders in the constitution of nature, are discovered to be very useful and of exceeding benefit to the preservation and well-being of the whole." And then, again, afterwards he speaks of the preservation of the several systems in infinite past time from falling upon each other, as of the natural, or originally established order of things.—Prop. xi. These sermons were originally preached at Boyle's Lecture in 1704.

† Religion of Nature Delineated, p. 173, 8vo edition. The first edition was published in 1722. Nota est illi operis sui series, omniumque illi rerum per manus suas iturarum scientia in aperto semper est.—*Seneca.*

moreover, to be observed, that the only analogy from human designs and contrivances which can suggest the notion that any periodical or other adjustment is to be looked out for in nature, consists in the fact that either the imperfection of the materials with which man has to deal, or the existence of laws or obstructions which he cannot control, always interferes with the perfect execution of all human designs. Hence a necessity for remedy or restoration, for which not even a perfection of original wisdom could possibly provide. Every watch must at some time require repair, and to be sent back to the watchmaker. But no limitation of the divine power can be inferred from this, or from any other such analogy.

The only objection, as I apprehend, which can be taken to what has been here stated is, that many facts are to be discerned in nature which go far beyond any meaning commonly, if ever, attributed to the word perturbation. Death is one of these facts, and there also exist various other sorts of destruction. It seems to have been discovered by modern astronomers that a resisting medium exists in, or pervades, the solar system which may, or must, have a tendency to retard its motion; and it is surmised that the accumulated effects of this tendency may, in the course of a vast number of ages, bring the whole of it to a final close. Again, the revolutions of the asteroids, or the falling

of aërolites, *may* indicate the destruction of some larger planet out of which they were formed. The great changes which have taken place in the apparent magnitudes of some of the stars, and the disappearance of others, may be allowed to arise from destructive agencies far beyond all human observation. Earthquakes and volcanoes are destructive, and if this planet which we inhabit, and all the works of it, are eventually to be burned up by some explosion of central fire, destruction will be there. Death, certainly, is the destruction, in the fullest sense in which the word can possibly be used, of the human frame. But still the word destruction cannot mean more than the decay or dissolution of existing *structures*. We cannot make any absolute severance of meaning between the perturbations of a system, and its destruction itself. All the *preponderant* arguments are for the stability of all God's works, taken as a whole; and these are fully adequate to make His unity and changelessness of wisdom and purpose certain and manifest. Assuredly none of the exceptions, or seeming exceptions, to this rule are to be compared for one moment with those many and revolting moral anomalies which we also see to subsist, but which will be shown hereafter to afford no adequate presumption against God's goodness or power. It is also altogether evident that no inference whatever for the *annihilation* of anything is warranted

in the least by any observation of nature which we are able to make. There is death, but then we rely on its being succeeded by another life. There are moral anomalies, but of these we humbly hope for the removal. Even if astronomers should be led to the belief of a general derangement of the planetary system, "who will now," it has been rightly asked, "be bold enough to doubt that further discovery may show the adjustment of this also?"* Or even if the whole be actually destroyed in its present form, the analogies are still untouched which lead us to believe that it will be restored in another form. Our knowledge of the great and the little does not warrant us to infer that even this to us most stupendous change would be more to God than the most trifling event. The human ashes are mingled with the soil, and become impalpable; but still only to do service in the germination of or product of some future harvest which is to follow.† This earth itself may decay, but still all its material may be used up in founding another. Intellect may not, and in its perfection commonly does not, survive even

* See the note, p. 59, in Lord Brougham's Essay on the Origin of Evil, subjoined to his edition of Paley's Natural Theology.

† See the quotations from Butler, in the beginning of the next chapter, p. 44, and compare also Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians, sect. 25, where this analogy is followed up by adducing that of the revification of the Phœnix as being a like analogy.

during the short tenure of human life; but yet we are all confident that it revives in heaven. And *virtue*, at any rate, whether moral or religious,* and this alone is the truly essential point of the case, never changes and never fails, always tends to justify hope, and to sooth suffering and to bring us nearer to God.

* See on this subject, chap. vii.

CHAPTER IV.

The same subject continued.

I HAVE stated sufficiently in the preceding chapter the argument from the contemplation of the planetary system, and of the universe, or rather of that portion of the universe which comes within human cognizance. The immensity, and wisdom, and power of the great Being who is its author, and the unchangeableness of the divine law which he has ordained, cannot require, I think, any further evidence than has been there adduced. A part, a very great part, of that law is the law of life. Life itself, therefore, is in the large sense, unchangeable, or rather, indestructible. This consequence follows inevitably on the preceding argument. In a point, however, of this incomparable importance, I will proceed to recite over again the same argument as it has been stated by Butler, and I will then refer very briefly to some of those specific adaptations of various parts of our own physical system to each other, in which, besides the marvels of the con-

trivance itself, its utilities also are highly conspicuous.

In the first place, then, of life. Butler, in the highly valuable chapter on a future state, with which he begins his Analogy, says as follows:—"We have no reason to think the destruction of living powers in the former sense to be *possible*." The sense here spoken of is "so as that the same living being shall be incapable of ever perceiving or acting again."* "Nor can we find anything throughout the whole analogy of nature to afford us the slightest presumption that animals ever lose their living powers; much less, if it were possible, that they lose them by death."† The same great writer argues again,‡ that it is shown "demonstratively" that no dissolution of any matter, or destruction of any organs or instruments, will be the dissolution or destruction of living agents, and that "there is no reason to conclude that death which destroys our bodily powers of sensation does so much as suspend the exercise of our present powers of reflection;"§ and he then adds that "death may in some sort answer to our birth."‖ All this is life—life from

* Analogy, edition of 1740, note p. 21, and see p. 23.

† P. 23. ‡ Pp. 33, 34. § P. 39.

‖ P. 40. See the whole context, and the quotations *ibid.*, from Strabo and Antoninus.—"So that our posthumous life, whatever there may be in it additional to our present, may not be entirely beginning anew, but going on."—*Butler, ibid.*

the dead. How intimate the coupling of death and of life! How plain the order of nature or providence, that as we prepare ourselves to undergo the one, so we should prepare ourselves also to resume, or rather for a fresh grant of the other! and this the more, inasmuch as we may almost assume that all merely phy-

"And thus when we go out of this world, we may pass into new scenes, and a new state of life and action, just as naturally as we came into the present." *Ibid.*, p. 43. See Plato's Phædo, chap. 16.—The principle of this chapter of the Phædo, I may observe, is that action and re-action are always equal. I copy the following sentences from the recent treatise on Hippolytus and his Age, by Dr. Bunsen, vol. ii. p. 66 :—"No finite life except unto death, no death except unto higher life. This formula is the solution of the great tragedy of human life" . . . . . "The most primitive and best established proof" [instead of the word *proof* I should here be willing to put *illustration*] "of this truth is the origin of language. Every language of which we know the history owes its origin to the decay and decomposition of another . . . . . Tribes and nations disappear, after having prepared the way for others." I am, I believe, not quite so sanguine as Dr. Bunsen in any anticipations which I can venture to form of the *earthly* progress of the human race towards its perfection ; but these sentences are certainly very apposite to the passage from Butler, which I have quoted above. If we may go back on this subject to tradition—possibly, to traditions transplanted from India through Greece, but without our having any power to trace their pedigree—we might go a long way in this investigation. See Leland on the advantage and necessity of the Christian revelation, part i. chap. ii. pp. 59-64, second edition, and the writers referred to by him in note c, p. 59. I cannot imagine the following remarkable lines of Ovid to be

sical organisation can be nothing else but life's instrument, an instrument which may of course be at any time discarded by the Supreme Artificer, and a new body provided at will for the work to be done.

To this conclusion it, I think, remains to be added, that though thus the infinite wisdom and power of the Creator are rendered the more evident by our inability to assign any term or limit to the duration of those wise provisions or contrivances which he submits to our cognizance, he still does not bar us from ascertaining, and if we will, even with our own eyes, the actual fact of a beginning of some portion of his almighty work; and of that work especially in which our relation to him is the closest, namely, the creation of man. If modern science has proved anything, it has proved decisively that man had no place in the original structure of the world which he now inhabits. Even if it were to be granted that a being like man could grow up without human parents, it is yet plain,

nothing more than one of those happy casualties of which he has so many:—

> Nec perit in tanto quicquam, mihi credite, mundo,
> Sed variat, faciemque novat: nascique vocatur,
> Incipere esse aliud, quàm quod fuit antè; morique,
> Desinere illud idem.—*Metamorph.* xv. 254.

This is very general, and is doubtless said in reference to all revolutions of matter, living or dead. I will not go on, tempting as every word is, with so hackneyed a quotation.

and as I have said may be made plain even to the eye, that there has been a time when he was not. Of the various strata of which we see that the earth is composed, we see that the older formations contain no animal remains whatsoever; we see no remains of man, except in those which are comparatively recent, and moreover of a date which appears to correspond entirely with the traditional and historical recollections, and records, of our own religious education and belief. But that such remains would have been found in the older formations also, if either man or the other animals had existed when these formations were made, is absolutely certain. It is of actual observation that they are found, and that the ruder and elder organisations are found in an overwhelming abundance, in the more recent deposits. That man, therefore, is not only a creation, which, indeed, he is at any rate, but also a recent creation; not only the work of the divine hand, but put by that hand, and within an assignable period of time, or a period which we may in some measure trace out, into a world constructed previously for his reception,—is not less a matter of certainty than his existence itself. The evidences of religion are too strong not to be safe at all events; too strong to be shaken; but still this contribution to them from the science of geology, a science sometimes unwisely imagined, as astronomy had been before imagined, to be in opposition to the doctrines of Scripture, is one

of the most remarkable of all examples that the more we examine into the works of the divine hand, the more and the greater, and the more unexpected, are the combinations which we find in them of wonder and skill, and of the united voices of nature and revelation. It also seems to me to be perfectly plain that this absolute proof of the existence of a creation within almost a definite time, which we derive from the physical examination of our own planet, furnishes another valuable inference also. We may couple this proof with the no less clear evidence which we also possess of the provision made for the security or stability of the planetary system to which we belong, or for its duration through a period in comparison of which all our human conceptions of time shrink into nothing, and to which we can attach no notion short of eternity. We thus obtain a demonstration that though the present forms of things have a beginning, the things themselves may have no end, that there *are* provisions shown by actual science, or by an authority independent of letter or precept, for the nursing up of time into what we may, and indeed must, account of as immortality; and, therefore, that all the doctrines which can best prepare for immortality are fostered by that nature to which both the past and the present, both life and immortality itself, equally belong.*

* On the geological proof of the comparatively recent creation of man, and of other animals, and on the force, or rather

II. I will now adduce, as I had proposed, a few instances of the utility of those specific adaptations which are made of the several parts of our own solar system to each other.

I observe first, that it is a very important part of the happiness of this system to have the sun in its centre. The cardinal and universal principle of gravitation would as much allow of the planets revolving round an opaque, as round a luminous body. But a central sun diffuses light and heat in all directions. Neither, as I suppose, can there be any doubt but that it diffuses other benefits besides, and benefits not yet fully understood. Recent discoveries have shown that the spots on the sun are united by some link of connection with the magnetic power existing on the surface of the earth. But in nature, wherever there is a connection, there is also a result from it, and the tendency of that result is beneficial. The calculation of the degree of heat which exists on the visible surface of the sun is, that it must be three hundred thousand times greater than that which it *gives out* on the earth's surface, an intensity far greater than would suffice to dissipate into vapour both gold and platina.* And yet this power is brought down before it reaches

the certainty, of the conclusion which it supplies, see Lord Brougham's Analytical View of the Researches on Fossil Osteology, particularly pp. 191-193.

* Herschel's Outlines, sect. 396.

the earth, into a degree not too great for the purpose which it is designed to fill. It is not, indeed, presumable that any such combustion or conflagration as this statement might at first seem to indicate, actually goes on in the sun itself;* but then there is at any rate a power either electric, or of some unknown character, which possesses, and if by a recondite, yet at the same time by a most wise process, the vivifying influence of which this enormous and baffling calculation furnishes the measure.

Secondly, gravitation is, we know, always in proportion to the mass of the gravitating body. The specific solidity or tenuity of the mass itself does not alter the principle on which it gravitates, or by which it moves. Encke's comet, through which the stars are visible with no apparent diminution of brightness, and which has been supposed to have no more coherence than a wreath of smoke, is seen to revolve round the sun under the operation of laws not less fixed and stable than those which regulate the motions of the earth.† We also know that it is requisite to the stability of the system, that those planets which have the larger masses should revolve in circular or nearly circular orbits. "If the orbit of Jupiter were as eccentric as that of Mercury, all the security for the stability of the system which analysis has pointed out would

* Herschel's Outlines, sect. 400.

† Professor Whewell's Bridgwater Treatise, p. 195.

disappear."* Here are two facts, the eccentricity of the orbit, and the smallness of the mass set to revolve in it, between which we do not discern the tie of relation. But they *are* related; they are so put together that the larger eccentricities are limited to the smaller planets, and in virtue of being so limited produce no sensible derangement or inconvenience. The gaseous nature of, as is supposed, all comets comes in exactly on the same principle. Their eccentricity, and the harmlessness of it, go together.

The *friction* which keeps everything at rest on earth has no place, or none to which we have a right to assign any deranging influence whatever, in impeding the course of the earth itself in its course through the heavens.† The circular or nearly circular form of the earth's orbit gives a comparative equality to the temperature of the seasons, which is essential to the comfort, and perhaps to the existence, of the present races, both of men and animals.‡ The law of latent heat, which seems at first to be a violation of law, and which takes us by surprise in the first physical inquiries which we make in our childhood, is another, and is also, as far as we can see, an independent contributor to the same result.§ We have, moreover, a fitting vehicle of heat and of cold, and of clouds and

* Professor Whewell's Bridgwater Treatise, note, p. 165.

† *Ibid.*, p. 246, and see what was said before, pp. 39, 41.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 158, 159. § *Ibid.*, p. 92.

rain in the atmosphere itself, which is also in itself an element of the nutrition both of plants and of animals, and the refractor of the rays of the sun into daylight.* If the eye is made for light, so also light, and perhaps daylight especially, is made for the eye. This same atmosphere is, moreover, the vehicle of sound and of voice, and voice is the expression of mind. "Is it by chance," asks Professor Whewell, "that the air and the ear exist together? Did the air produce the organisation of the ear, or the ear independently organised anticipate the constitution of the atmosphere?"† There is but one answer to this question, unless we allow the splendid harmony of the Lucretian verse to shut our eyes and ears at once to both the reason and the nature of things. "No bodily organ," says Lucretius, "is made to be used; but, because it exists, therefore we use it."‡

The direct irony which Socrates§ had passed in an elder age on this same argument, if argument it is to be called, and which ought in reason to have put it down for ever, can scarcely be said to refute it better or more plainly than the very words used by the poet

* Professor Whewell's Bridgewater Treatise, p. 127.

† *Ibid.*, p. 123, and see pp. 256, 257.

‡ Nil adeo quoniam natum est in corpore, ut uti
Possemus, sed quod natum est, id procreat usum.
Lucretius, iv. 832, 833.
And see also the verses which follow.

§ Phædo, chap. 47.

himself. Strange, very strange, is the existence either in ancient or in modern times of so great a folly, which, however, I am far from attributing in all, if in any, instances, to the wish being father to the thought, that there may be no God. I believe this folly to have arisen partly out of the superstitions attached to false religions, and the abuses which have crept too often and too generally into the true religion itself. These superstitions and abuses always provoke a re-action which will also of itself naturally, and almost necessarily, mingle the false with the true.* But it also has arisen partly out of the great error of severing law from design, which has often taken a diseased possession of minds in other respects truly philosophical, and from that of imagining that there can exist any argument for design itself which does not imply a personal designer.† *Nature*, mere nature, is in itself nothing, nothing but that tissue of works which God has created, under the operation of laws which He has ordained; or, rather still, is nothing but a word, the mere aggregate of the divine designs, is not even, properly speaking, the *servant*, whom God sends to do his work, but rather the *chariot* in which he rides himself. This infinite power is not distracted by the little, or what to us seems little, is not oppressed by the great. His presence and providence are in all things,

* See the Preface to Paley's Moral Philosophy.

† See before, p. 23.

in the growth of the vegetable, in the revolutions of the planets, and in a still higher, and so far a still more divine operation, in the infusion of life into the whole animated creation, and of reason, and of what is still more than reason, of morals and religion also, into man. All this I will allow to be nature, and not any one portion of it more than another. But then it is nature, because it is the rule and the will of the mighty Designer; a rule, and a will, and also a goodness, which are not excluded from anything which he has made, but which are best seen, and most praised, by those who are brought by it into the closest correspondence with their own divine Creator and original, their Father and their God.

To this it is to be added, that neither the perfection of God's wisdom, and power, and goodness, nor yet the unchangeableness of his law itself, excludes his *control.* Nor yet is this only because to speak of excluding the infinite is nothing less than a solecism. We know, or rather we see, that he does also personally* direct and administer, changeless as is his law, the creation which he has made. It is quite plain that he is a *governor*, that events are *ordered,* and ordered by Him, so as to produce an acknowledgment and feeling of them in our own minds as having some direct and certain intent. No government can pos-

* See as before, pp. 23, 24.

sibly be more real, or, to use Butler's word, more *formal* than this.* We see this principle remarkably evident in the law of *life*. This law, unbending as it is, requires conditions for its development, in which the present agency and administration of the almighty Contriver is almost more conspicuous than in anything else. And when thus the agency of the almighty hand is seen to exist, it is impossible to assign any place or void in which it shall terminate. But still it is, I think, the most to be looked for, as of course it must be of the most importance, in its higher aspects, in the government of reasonable beings by the hope of reward and the fear of punishment, or in the making conditions and contingencies a part of our law, an act which does not less imply a personal control in the lawgiver, than it implies personal liberty in the suscipient of the law. The truly moral mind is also, I believe, most sensible to it in its own conscience or in its own moralities, or rather in acknowledging all its own best feelings and aspirations, and its conscience itself, to be an infusion of that heavenly Spirit who is always present and always working in all who listen for his voice.

It has been observed by Butler, that "whether the pleasure or the pain which follows upon our behaviour be owing to the Author of nature acting upon us

* Analogy, part i. chap. ii. p. 52.

every moment which we feel it, or to his having at once contrived and executed his own part in the plan of the world, makes no difference in the matter before us."* And so far, doubtless, this is true; that the unalterableness of the law,† or its having been laid down in the beginning in the plan of the world, makes no change in the case. But for the sake of avoiding all possible misconstruction, this great writer should, I think, have been careful here to observe, that the Author of nature *is* himself acting on us at every moment in which we feel his acting; that his personal agency is not the less personal, because it is according to law; or because, as no writer ever argued better than himself, we "refer ourselves to him implicitly, and cast ourselves upon him;" because "he is not a creature, but the almighty God," "infinite in power, perfect in wisdom," and "fills with his presence both the heaven and the earth."‡

* Analogy, part i. chap. ii. p. 52, and see p. 53, where the proof of the divine government or control, from the fact of our being placed in a state of reward and punishment, is fully made out.

† Butler's Sermons. Sermon xiii., On the Love of God, p. 282; and see what will be said hereafter in this treatise on the subject of prayer, in chap. 19.

‡ Butler, *Ibid.*, pp. 271-275.

CHAPTER V.

Of some of the adaptations of the structure of the human and animal frame to its designed purposes.

THUS much of the mechanism of the world, or rather of that great system of the universe of which our own world is but a part. I will now proceed to state in a sufficient number of instances some of those adaptations of the structure of the human and animal frame to the materials of which they are composed, and the purposes which they have to answer, from which we may draw, with no less certainty and thankfulness, the same conclusions.

I take my first instance from the circulation of the blood. There is no artificial adaptation of wheels or balances either more easy or more mechanical than that of the hydraulic tubes through which this circulation is carried, and which are made for it. One of the commonest maxims of hydraulics is, as all know, that a current which flows through any one channel with a given rapidity, will, if divided into two

currents, require a greater area through which to flow. If the agriculturist allow only the same area to the various ducts into which his watercourse is divided which was found requisite for the original stream, his meadow will be flooded. Consequently he gives them a larger area. In the same manner the engineer. If he has to divide between two secondary pipes the same quantity of water which before passed through one, the bore or area of the two pipes must always be greater, taking the two together, than that of the first. But so also in the arteries. When an artery is divided into branches, the united areas of the branches must be greater than that of the trunk; and so they are.* I need not add that design and wisdom, or I might use the word science, are in all these cases certain and conspicuous.

I now turn to the eye. We know that in telescopes an inconvenience was long suffered and complained of, which arose from the separation of the pencils of light into different colours. In the achromatic telescope, this inconvenience is corrected by making use of lenses composed of different substances. But how was this invention made? It was in its real history a direct and absolute *imitation*, by the optician who made it, of the different humours existing in the eye

* Sir Charles Bell's Notes on Paley's Natural Theology, chap. xxiv. vol. ii. p. 384.

itself.* Could this provision, asks Paley, exist in the eye itself without purpose, which suggested the means of obtaining that same purpose to the optician?

Some writers, in their desire to exclude the inference of design from the works of creation, have devised a doctrine of appetencies, of which it is the meaning that matter is endued with an instinctive tendency to project some effort or impulse which, gradually augmenting or improving in the course of a countless number of generations, creates at length the organ which it requires.† Thus the prehensile tendency is said to create the hand, one of the most perfect and elaborate of all instruments; but how, in any case, any need can originate actual power, or, to go back to the eye, how blindness can create either the pupil or the lid, or even generate the desire of seeing, no imagination ever can devise; or, to say no more on this folly, how can a *tendency*, as Paley and others have well remarked, create the barrier which confines it? How can a spring, which wants to go to a certain place, create the ligament which keeps it *from* the place to which it would go?‡ Again,

* Paley, p. 23.

† There cannot be any clearer illustration of the real, and indeed, irresistible strength of the argument from analogy, than that able men should ever have resorted to such a *fetch* as this for the sake of evading it.

‡ "The next circumstance which I shall mention under this head of muscular arrangement, is so decisive a mark of inten-

amongst the most remarkable happinesses or perfections of the animal frame, and very evidently so of the

tion, that it always appeared to me to supersede, in some measure, the necessity of seeking for any other observation upon the subject; and that circumstance is, the tendons which pass from the leg to the foot being bound down by a ligament at the ancle. The foot is placed at a considerable angle with the leg. It is manifest, therefore, that flexible springs, passing along the interior of the angle, if left to themselves, would, when stretched, start from it. The obvious preventative is to tie them down. And this is done in fact. Across the instep, or rather just above it, the anatomist finds a strong ligament, *under* which the tendons pass to the foot. The effect of the ligament as a bandage can be made evident to the senses, for if it be cut the tendons start up. The simplicity, yet the clearness, of this contrivance, its exact resemblance to established resources of art, place it amongst the most indubitable manifestations of design with which we are acquainted."—*Paley's Natural Theology*, chap. ix. p. 155. Neither is this all. "Where it is necessary, the tendons run in sheaths, or there are placed under them smooth and lubricated pulleys, over which they run; and where there is much friction there is a provision equal in effect to the friction wheel in machinery." And yet all this, it is further observed, is but "the coarsest, roughest portion of the animal frame . . . . . Whilst these grosser parts of the animal body exhibit a perfection in mechanical adaptation far greater than the utmost ingenuity of man can exhibit in his machinery, let the reader remember that they bear no comparison with the finer parts of the animal body; such, for example, as the structure of those nerves which convey the mandate of the will to the moving parts, or of the vessels which are conveying the blood in the circulation." —Sir Chas. Bell's *Appendix to Paley's Theology*, note 1, pp. 215, 216.

human frame in particular, ranks, as Paley also has well observed, its stability, or rather the combination of the stability or resisting power of the frame itself, with the lubricity of the joints; both which qualities are equally wanted, and yet at first sight might seem to be inconsistent. This power or perfection is in no instance more conspicuous than in the neck of a healthy infant of a few months old. At an age when the rest of the body has little else of resistance or consistency than that of a mere lump, and may be turned any way at the pleasure of the nurse, the vertebræ of the spine acquire a firmness, and almost a rigidity, which enable it to support the heavy head. This is a combination also which appears to be altogether inimitable by human art. People make orreries, but no mechanism ever attempted to construct a *doll*, which should at the same time have flexible limbs and the power of standing.*

* I subjoin the following extract from Dr. Southwood Smith's Philosophy of Health, vol. i. pp. 324–326, 1835:—"Such are the moving powers which put in motion the complicated mechanism provided for the function of locomotion. And these powers are adequate to their office, but they are what may be termed expensive powers; agents requiring a high degree of organisation, and the utmost resources of the economy to support and maintain them. Hence in the construction of the framework of the machine which they may have to move, whatever mechanical contrivance may economise their labour is adopted. The construction, form, and dispo-

The contrivance discovered in knitting together a broken bone is another process which is highly striking and instructive:—"First blood is poured out into

sition of the several parts of that framework have all reference to two objects—first, the combination of strength with lightness; and, secondly, security to tender organs, with the power of executing rapid, energetic, and sometimes violent motions. The combination is effected, and the object attained, in a mode complicated in the detail, simple in the design, and perfect in the result. The weight of the body transmitted from the arch of the pelvis to a second arch formed by the neck of the thigh bone, and from this in a perpendicular direction, to a third arch formed by the foot, is ultimately received by the heel behind, and by the metatarsal bones, and the first phalanges of the toes before, and more especially by the metatarsal joints belonging to the great and little toe, which have a special apparatus of muscles, for the purpose of preserving steadily their relative situation to the heel. The weight of the body is thus sustained on a series of arches, from which it is in succession transmitted to the ground, where it ultimately rests upon a tripod; forms known and selected as the best adapted to afford support and to give security of position. Columns of compact bone, superimposed one upon another, and united at different points by bands of prodigious strength, form the pillars of support. But these bony columns never touch each other, are never in actual contact; are all separated by layers of elastic matter, which while they assist in binding the columns together, enable them to move one upon another, as upon so many pliant springs. The layers of cartilage interposed between the vertebral column and the pelvis; the layer of cartilage that lines the acetabulum, and that covers the head of the femur; the layer of cartilage that covers the lower extremity of the femur, and the upper extremity of the

the fracture; it coagulates; soon after, very small or capillary blood vessels shoot into the coagulated blood; the blood disappears; gelatinous matter alone remains; this gradually hardens, and bony particles are deposited which fill up the break and knit the bone . . . . Again, when after a fracture the bone of the limb is set, the ends may overlap, and thus the limb be shortened. What, then, shall become of the muscles which had been of a length to fit the former size of the bone? Those muscles immediately begin to shorten much beyond their original natural contraction, and they acquire a power of further contraction to suit the altered length of the bone. It is as if, upon any accident happening to one part of a

tibia and fibula, and the tarsus; the successive layers of cartilage interposed between the several bones of the tarsus; and, finally, the layer of cartilage that covers both the tarsal and the digital extremities of the metatarsal bones, are so many special provisions to prevent the weight of the body from being transmitted to the ground with a shock; and at the same time so many barriers established between the ground and the spinal cord, the brain, and the soft and tender organs contained in the thoracic and abdominal cavities, to prevent these organs from being injured by the reaction of the ground upon the body. The excellence of this mechanism is seen in its results; in contemplating 'from what heights we can leap, or to what heights we can spring, to what distances we can bound, how swiftly we can run, how firmly we can stand, how nimbly we can dance, and yet how perfectly we can balance ourselves on the smallest surfaces of support.'"

steam engine, whereby it had changed its dimensions, the neighbouring parts wholly unaffected by the accident were of themselves to change their dimensions or their position, so that their action should also be varied, and varied so as to suit the alteration in the part affected, thus continuing the movement of the machine, but in a different adjustment, and all without any interference of the engineer."*

One remarkable distinction of man from the lower animals is in the length of time during which he is dependent on his parents, both for the bodily, and also the mental and moral nurture, which he derives from them. Mental nurture is not wanted, or I suppose I should rather say is scarcely wanted, for the brute creation, and therefore they have it not, or scarcely have it. But to man, and to the attainment of the ends for which he is designed, it is altogether necessary, and is reposed both wisely and happily in the hands of those objects of his human affections, for whom the length of both his physical and moral education infuses in him an habitual confidence and regard.

Of the structure of brute animals I do not purpose to enter into any lengthened detail. The

* Lord Brougham's note on the Vis Medicatrix, Dissertations, vol. ii. pp. 107-109.

strength and lightness of the bird tribe, and perhaps of the smaller birds especially, disclose an aptitude to the purpose which they are intended to fill, than which no other is either more obvious or more pleasing. A thousand marks also of the same unity of principle which is at work in the formation of the mammalia, are also not less visible all through the strong discriminations by which this other great class of the animal creation is severed from that class. "There is not a single large artery in man, to which a corresponding branch might not be found in the bird; and on the other hand, there is not perhaps a single large artery in the bird to which there is not a correspondent branch in man."* But I must forbear to enter into any, even the most tempting, particulars respecting either the form or the instincts of these beautiful races, although they are continually flitting before our path. It will be enough for me, after what I have already said, not to be altogether silent on that great kingdom of animated nature which comes nearest to our own. I take first the elephant. Certainly no skill is wanting in the construction of the *trunk* of this huge animal, which is composed of forty thousand or more small muscles, and is one of the most efficient and adroit instruments which exist. The size of the

* Carpenter's Animal Physiology, sect. 261. See also sect. 476, and also chap. xiv.

head, unwieldy as it appears to be, is in fact a requisite of the animal. "The large size of the muscular masses by which the trunk is connected with it, require an extensive bony surface for their attachment," and for this reason a number of large bony cells are provided which give necessarily a great size to its exterior.*

Next of the camel. "The eye is shielded from the intense glare of light by a prominent overhanging brow and by long eye-lashes; and the nostrils are so constructed as to be closed by the animal at pleasure, so as to keep out the fine sand."† "The elastic cushion which extends beneath the toes, spreads at each step according to the pressure made on it, and thus affords a firm footing even upon sand; whilst the callous skin with which it is covered prevents the animal from sustaining inconvenience from the heat of the surface on which it treads." Scarcely anything more excites the surprise of a casual observer than the apparent clumsiness of this callosity; scarcely any adaptation to circumstances is more really admirable. It is also to be observed, that the young camel is born with these natural cushions on which it takes its repose, or on which it kneels down to be loaded, and that they are not produced by the habit of kneeling.‡

* Carpenter's Zoology, sect. 286. † *Ibid.*, sect. 279.

‡ On the utility of the camel's hump, see Carpenter, *ibid.*;

These, the elephant and the camel, are among the largest animals; and yet the delicacy of all these provisions is altogether inimitable, except in nature itself. The camel is a ruminant, and inasmuch as its natural food consists not of meadow herbage but of thorny shrubs, it is furnished accordingly with strong incisors and canine teeth, which enable it to browse on them with ease.* The sloth, one of the most remarkable of animals, is not a ruminant; but then it wants the hard teeth of other herbivorous quadrupeds, and therefore has a stomach given it which is divided into four chambers, chambers obviously analogous to the four stomachs of the ruminants, and in which, though without any actual rumination, that work is still done which the teeth cannot do.†

A very few words before I close this chapter, of the structure of vegetables, and especially of that unity of character, and connection with the other portions of the divine creation, which is kept up in them, and kept up even in the midst of obvious differences.

In the first place, a perfect seed is one of the most wonderful productions of the whole natural world. It

and see, also, Sir Charles Bell's observations on the hedgehog, an animal which, though of small size, is of the same class with the camel.—*British Mammalia*, p. 76, quoted *ibid.*

* Carpenter's Zoology, sect. 279. † *Ibid.*, sect. 243.

contains a living principle within an organised body of cellular membrane, and this principle is capable of indefinite expansion. The acorn has been said to comprise every member of the largest oak. The vegetable membrane itself is composed of innumerable distinct vesicles, variously arranged, and of which each is clothed with a thin, pellucid, elastic integument, originally uninflated, and inconceivably minute, but capable of being distended to a limited size, according to the nature of the plant to which it belongs.

Secondly, of the roots. Of these there are many modifications, differing chiefly in form, but differing also, it is probable, in the manner in which as the recipients of the food which the plants require they are made to act. It seems to be a general law that all those plants which are specially assailable by drought are furnished with bulbous or tuberous stems or appendages, to enable them to resist its effects.* Again, the roots, besides fixing the plant in the soil, absorb the moisture which it requires; and this moisture usually contains, in a state of solution, some of the solid particles which are the materials of its growth.† The principal roots of a tree enlarge and extend in proportion to the growth and expansion of the stem

* Main's Popular Botany, 1835, pp. 19-29.

† Carpenter's Animal Physiology, p. 3.

and the branches; and it has been observed, that if the downright or tap root of the oak be destroyed in transplanting, lateral roots will quickly be formed which supply its place.* Then again, thirdly, the ordinary mode in which the stem of the tree is increased is by layers of bark which, as other layers yearly succeed, are converted into albumen. These layers are the principal channels for the motion of the sap. The ascent of the sap is a function of plants not less remarkable than that of the circulation of the blood in animals, and is moreover a force which is in adjustment with the force of gravitation, and the magnitude of the earth, and the pressure of the atmosphere.† Plants have a respiration which is essentially of the same nature with that of animals.‡ The length of the year is suited to their seeding, their ripening, and their winter's rest. The variety of climates is no less fraught with similar adaptations. The warm and splendid vegetation of the tropics is replaced in the temperate climates by trees and shrubs which would not bear a burning sun; and even in the regions of almost perpetual frost by firs and birches, and willows and mosses.§ The structure of plants is adapted to the average of heat and cold; and this,

* Main's Popular Botany, p. 33.

† Whewell's Bridgwater Treatise, pp. 45, 46.

‡ Carpenter's Animal Physiology, p. 425.

§ Whewell's Bridgwater Treatise, pp. 65, 66.

although in our own climate scarcely anything *seems* to be more changeable than the weather, is every year almost exactly the same.* Tropical plants in general suffer from the *length* of the summer daylight of higher latitudes, and when they are removed into these latitudes it is found necessary to shade them during part of the day.† The opening of some flowers is regulated by the light and the heat; that of others by the weather; that of others again merely by the time of the day.‡ Gay flowers predominate greatly over the sombre and gloomy.§ Clouds serve at once to moderate the heat of the sun, to check the radiation of cold, to be the vehicles of the moisture which plants require, and to encourage their growth. A warm shower sets the processes of vegetation to work gently and equably. Paley has remarked, in his own felicitous language, on the happiness of the provision by which this necessary boon descends in drops, and not in torrents. Ice and snow are the product of frost and cold, but serve to protect the roots of plants from congelation.

Thus uniform, and at the same time, thus multitudinous, is that wisdom which fills both heaven and earth with its operation; which covers the ground with forests, and cherishes their growth; which evidences

* Whewell's Bridgwater Treatise, p. 59.
† *Ibid.*, p. 37. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 35.
§ Journal of a Naturalist, p. 79.

itself both in the summer's heat, and in the winter's cold, in the checks imposed on the fiery rage of the one, and on the piercing chills of the other. Every feature of this whole process is a proof and an illustration of that one principle which pervades the whole, and by which the forest itself, after its nurture into magnificence, yet at length disappears before man, and has its place taken by herbage and by corn. But I must here forbear.

I had intended to proceed from these few specimens of the skill displayed in the organisms of the mammalia, and in the structure of vegetables, to the no less wonderful, but still analogous adaptations of insect life and contrivance. God, it has often been observed, is not more to be praised in his greater works than in his lesser, which also proclaim in every language which reason can speak, that they owe their origin to a hand divine. Indeed, in some respects he is seen in his lesser works the more clearly, inasmuch as our weakness is less oppressed by their magnitude, and we are the better able to examine and analyse them. The wisdom of the bee, the form of its cells, the perfection of its geometry, and the degree and artifice of the division of labour practised in its workings, almost exhaust investigation, and would exhaust belief, if not supported by evidence always at hand, and which may be always verified. But on this subject it is enough to refer to books which are in the hands of every one, or

to a notoriety which has been kept up ever since the first dawn of knowledge or of inquiry.* The skill of the ant,† and the prudence of the spider, are not less marked than those of the bee. The aquatic larva of the caddis closes the mouth of its case with a network sufficiently close to exclude insects, but which allows the water to pass through.‡ The *Tinea pillonetta*, or cloth moth, is born naked; "but these moths," says Bonnet, "as soon as they are born begin to think of clothing themselves. They do not dress in the same uniform, nor employ the same materials in the fabrication of their garments; there is, indeed, a greater difference of clothing amongst them than amongst the different nations of mankind. The stuff is manufactured by the insect itself, and consists of silk of its own furnishing, and the detritus of the cloth on which it feeds. When its covering is completed, it lines the interior, in immediate contact with its skin, with very soft silk; it never puts on a new dress, but as it grows, goes on adding to the old one. To make the coat fit when the

* See particularly Rennie's Insect Architecture, chap. vi., "On the Geometrical Perfection of the Form of the Cell." See, also, the Appendix to Lord Brougham's Dialogues on Instinct, pp. 242, 244. See, also, Huber on Bees, as quoted in Dr. Badham's Insect Life, pp. 130, 131; and Huber, p. 408, as quoted in Rennie's Insect Architecture, p. 106. See also, *ibid.*, pp. 107, 108, 111.

† Insect Life, pp. 136, 137, and Huber, as there quoted.

‡ Carpenter's Animal Physiology, p. 701.

body grows broader, it slits open the cylinder half way down, first on one side, and then on the other, and then sutures new pieces on to the old."* By what derivation all these purposes of the divine wisdom are brought into effect, it is not easy closely to investigate. The three worlds, as they may be called, of mechanism, of instinct, and of reason, run much into each other, and it is not possible, I suppose, to discern the exact line by which they are separated. Neither yet, of course, is the ten-thousandth portion of either of these three great worlds recapitulated here, or possible to be recapitulated. But though thus the wisdom evidenced in them all is of a far higher origin and perfection than we can analyse or trace, it is not on that account the less, but much the more, elaborate and conspicuous. I go on, therefore, to state some few of those facts respecting the intelligence of the higher animals, which appear to me to be requisite to fill up that outline of what we know of the general scheme of the divine work in the universe, which it is here my object to present.

* Badham's Insect Life, pp. 141, 142.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the combinations of instinct and reason, and of the inferences which these combinations supply.

I ENTER on this subject with a few notices respecting the reasoning of the elephant, and the rather because I have already adverted in the preceding chapter to some parts of the bodily structure of this remarkable animal.

The elephant is naturally timid. In his undisciplined state he flies from the tiger, and will not exert himself to crush or destroy his fierce enemy, unless overtaken, or on the point of being overtaken, and consequently reduced to the necessity of engaging in a contest which he would not have dared to provoke. But when trained and mounted, he resists the tiger's attack, and bears, without moving, or flinching, the wounds inflicted on him; and, what is still more, his own courage and resolution rises or falls, in proportion to the dependence which he has learnt to place on his rider, and on his rider's skilfulness as a shot. If this

be not reasoning, it is impossible to say what reasoning is. The dog and the horse acquire like habits and power; that is, they reason on like principles; and all these animals appear to be no less clearly sensible than man himself of the feeling of self-applause, when they have executed well and successfully the task confided to them, and of shame, when guilty of cowardice, or mistake.* A dog, when he has run a thorn into his foot, will come up whining to his master to ask relief. A horse will learn to open a gate, and to pump water, and to perform acts still more remarkably analogous than these to those of mankind.† Be-

* I copy the following sentence from the description of an Indian tiger hunt, by a very exact and careful observer:—"It is customary, after the *death* of a tiger, to give the elephant a large mass of soft sugar, as a 'bonne bouche,' *if he has stood firm*, and the animal itself instantly puts up his trunk for it. If he has not behaved well, he will neither put up his trunk to his rider, nor take the sugar when offered." The great master of inductive philosophy has, in his essay on Atheism, the following observation on the similar behaviour of the dog:—"For take an example of a dog, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on, when he finds himself maintained by a man, who to him is instead of God, or 'melior natura:' which courage is manifestly such as that creature, without that confidence of a better nature than his own, could never attain.'—*Bacon's Essays*, p. 78, edition of 1807. "So man," Bacon then proceeds, "when he resteth and assureth himself upon divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith, which human nature in itself could not obtain."

† Carpenter's Animal Physiology, art. 717, and see Lord

tween such processes of mind as these and human reason, whatever comparisons or inequalities may be alleged between them, no *line* of discrimination, although we allow the processes or powers to be incommensurate, can possibly be drawn.

Of the beaver, inasmuch as he is not the friend of man, like the dog, the horse, or the elephant, we scarcely know so well how far to refer the operations to his own personal reasoning power, or to the no less marvellous, though more mechanical, skill of instinct alone.* A half-domesticated animal of this species was known to build his hut, or dam, in a room in which he could not derive any advantage from it. This same individual, after laying on one of his materials, would often sit up over against it, and appear to

Brougham's Dialogue on Animal Intelligence, especially pp. 120, 121, 124.

* I need not assign any reason for this selection of the *beaver* among the animals in which the combination between instinct and reason is most remarkable. But, certainly, there is none in which it is more puzzling. Design, an original design, is not in the instance of any other animal more conspicuous. But it is impossible to believe that the beaver itself possesses anything more of the theory, or has acquired any more insight into the fact, that his arch will resist the current better than a straight wall, or that he calculates previously on the falling of the tree on the side on which it is cut into, than the bee possesses with regard to the economy of its hexagonal cells, which no one, I suppose, ever imagines to be due to its own mathematics.

consider his work, and sometimes change the position of the material, and sometimes leave it in its place.* Beavers, in their natural state, although they live solitarily during the summer, yet on the approach of winter unite in troops of two or three hundred or more, for the purpose of constructing a common habitation. They choose a running stream, and cut down with their strong teeth the trees which they want, *above* the place where they intend to build, that they may thus obtain the advantage of the current to bring them

* Carpenter's Physiology, art. 708. Of the sagacity of the *ant*, the following instance may be selected :—"A wall had been erected with the view of sustaining a vaulted ceiling still incomplete: the ants who had begun constructing it had given it too little elevation to meet the opposite partition upon which it was to rest. Had it been continued on the original plan, it must infallibly have met the wall at about one-half of its height, and this it was necessary to avoid. This state of things very forcibly claimed my attention, when one of the ants arriving at the place, and visiting the works, seemed to be struck by the difficulty which presented itself, and immediately obviated it by taking down the ceiling and raising the wall on which it had reposed; it then in my presence constructed a new ceiling with the fragments of the former one."—*Huber*, as quoted in *Dr. Badham's Insect Life*, pp. 136, 137. I do not see how the fact here recorded can possibly imply anything less than both observation and experience, and the acting on the knowledge which that observation and experience had supplied. Neither yet can I see how the acting on acquired observation and experience can be anything less than an exercise of reasoning power.

to the spot: and they gnaw the bases of these trees on one side only, and so that they may always fall across the stream. They make their dams also convex towards the current, and thus give them the greater strength; they choose water which is deep enough to keep it from being frozen to the bottom; and they will often construct a new close to an old habitation, and make the two tops into one, and open a communication between the two. These are their operations where they are found in numbers, and are in tolerable tranquillity; but when the neighbourhood of man interferes with their multiplying, they do not set themselves to build distinct habitations in or across the stream, but content themselves with making excavations in the banks.*

I now proceed to subjoin some further and more general observations on the subject of the preceding chapters.

Let us first take, then, physical astronomy. The splendour and immensity of the spacious firmament and spangled heavens which are set before our eyes, give an elevation to the religious sentiment of the beholder, which no mere astonishment at the marvels of animal instinct can equal. And then, again, nothing else, probably, produces in all minds, and espe-

* Carpenter's Physiology, art. 707, and Cartwright's Journal of Transactions on the Coast of Labrador, vol. iii. p. 18, &c.

cially in the minds of the ignorant, so strong a sense of the divine greatness and immensity as is produced by some of those operations of nature of which the utility, though real, is least apparent. Nothing else of ordinary occurrence is, I imagine, so *impressive* as a storm of thunder and lightning. To these we might add a volcano, or an earthquake; and if so we may see the Lord in the tempest, not less than in the still small voice.

In the proofs given of design in the structure of animals and plants, and in the realm of instinct, we appear to see more clearly and expressively than anywhere else a direct utility and subservience to the commonest possible wants and necessities. We can here institute a closer comparison than in anything else between the divine and human contrivances. We can here compare them in little things, and in little things man can do much. He can be very ingenious; he can invent instruments; he can even call down lightning out of a cloud; he can preserve the seed which is to impregnate the soil; he can prepare the soil for the reception of the seed. But still even here, and as we may almost say in his own department, the details of vegetation and instinct show that he is nothing to God. He can no more do anything so minute as much of what is done in creation, than he can do anything so large. He can devise no building so perfect as the cell of the bee, nor any instrument so

convertible as the trunk of the elephant; and it is also to be remarked that even the minutest works of God are yet often, minute as they are, on a scale which almost oppresses by its magnitude. Scarcely anything is more minute than the structure of the corallines; and yet they are turned into rocks, shoals, islands, and may be the basis of continents.

These are some few of the conclusions with which we are supplied by our observation of the design and the contrivance of nature, both animate and inanimate, and by some of the examples of those extraordinary instincts which bring up even the brute into a comparison with man. But man himself, or the direct contemplation of the rational, which are also the moral, faculties of our own human frame and condition, again opens to us a still higher and nobler series of thought. If the creation of all this machinery of which we have been here speaking has in it something so august or so marvellous, how much more to create the mind, which is capable of tracing out its wonders and its extent! If it be a work of wisdom to invent a watch, how much more to make the watchmaker!* And, also, of how much united wisdom and goodness

* See Socrates in Xenophon's Memorabilia, lib. iv. sect. 13, and lib. iv. chap. iii. sect. 11, and Cicero de Naturâ Deorum, ii. 6.—"Jam vero animum ipsum, mentemque hominis, rationem, consilium, prudentiam, qui non divinâ curâ perfecta esse perspicit, is his ipsis rebus mihi videtur carere."—*Ibid.*, lix.

to make all this high work subservient to the still far higher and nobler object of producing in the mind thus created a love of the Creator, a sense of duty, and a provision for working out its own happiness in a future state!

To go on to another view of the same subject. I have shown, I think, that the whole creation, so far as we are capable of forming any judgment on it as a whole, may naturally and reasonably be divided into what we may call three worlds, the inanimate, the vital or instinctive, and lastly the rational. No precise line, as I apprehend, can be drawn, which separates either life from instinct, or instinct from reason; nor yet, indeed, if we go further back, which severs the sort of organisation which we find even in the rock, from that of the vegetable. We cannot draw the line between the vegetable and the worm, or even deny, as I think I have already shown, to some of the higher animals some gleams at least of the directly moral affections, and of the sense of shame.* Neither yet, as I apprehend, can any actual line be drawn, which shall distinguish the intelligence of man from that of the lower animals, or that of any one class of the lower animals from the class above, or below it.† This, I think, is

* See p. 75, and note *ibid.*

† See Lord Brougham's Dialogue on Intelligence, and Discourse on Natural Theology, pp. 74, 75. "There are some

plain fact; and one reason, apparently, if it be not too minute a reason to allege, for this close, and almost confused, intermingling of these three different orders of creation of which I have spoken, is that it exemplifies the natural and consistent operation of the pervading power and superintendence of the one Lord of the whole.

But there is another comment, also, which, I think, may be worth making on the co-existence of these three different orders or laws of creation with one another. The law of inanimate matter, of which the law of gravitation may, I suppose, be selected as one of the most considerable features, is a law which operates without any exception whatever. The heaven and the earth, even those stars of which the light has not yet reached our own orb since the creation, are subject alike to that one universal agency, which both knits together the sun and the planets, and draws even the projectile of a few yards out of its course. No space cognisable by man takes him out of its influence; no sphere is too minute for its operation; and neither the great, nor the little, introduces a single

brutes, it is observed by Mr. Locke, that seem to have as much knowledge and reason as some that are called men, and he goes on to say that there is such a connection between the animal and the vegetable kingdom as makes the difference scarcely perceptible between the lowest of the one, and the highest of the other."—*Dialogue on Intelligence*, p. 175.

element of discord, or as I have said of exception, into the principle on which it works, and by which it is regulated.

The law of the vegetable world is the next law. Some of the provisions made by this law may appear sometimes to fail. The impregnation of the seed vessels will often be baffled of its natural fruit; or some unknown and unavoidable disease or decay will sweep off products on which we had every ground to rely, with which we could be furnished by industry, or observation. But still we do not doubt but that these failures are according to some law, although a law which we do not discern; and we are also sensible that in this department of nature we do come very near to certainty. Giving the fertility of the soil, the aptitude of the climate, the goodness of the seed, and the favourableness of the season, it is then barely possible for the industrious husbandman to be altogether disappointed in the crop which he expects. Still, however, his business is with an organisation more subtle than that of the mountain or the rock, and he has accordingly to encounter chances which he cannot foresee.

Our next world is the world of instinct; and here it is a common remark that what instinct does it does better than reason. No reason possesses in its own province the unerring penetration of either the dog or the bee; and, on the other hand, instinct steps into

the province of reason itself; and the only distinction made by Descartes between human reasoning and that of the brutes, is, that man uses signs to express his thoughts, while brute animals express their feelings (passions) in some other way.*

But in giving any, even the least, expression to feeling, the brute apparently steps in the same degree towards liberty. The planets revolve in their orbits in strict necessity. The growth of the vegetable is scarcely, if at all, by a less unchangeable, though a less apparent, rule. But the law of instinct will sometimes be deserted altogether. The animals dependent on, or habituated to, man, will often prefer their master's service to the law of their kind. The dog will fight for his master against odds which he would not have dared to face in his own defence, or will starve himself to death in watching his grave. I have known of a dog, who when on a journey with his master, would often loiter behind, or run before, the carriage, while on the road; but on approaching a town, he would, of his own accord, jump up behind, for the

* See a note in Hallam's Literature of Europe, part iii. chap. iii. sect. 100. "As in plants, where the motions are without animal life, those motions are more perfect and undisturbed, so if there be any animal wholly without reason, the operations of mental instinct are the more regular and perfect; and in any animal whatever, they are so in proportion as reason is dormant or inactive."—*Lord Brougham's Dialogue on Instinct*, p. 12.

sake of guarding the trunks. I myself believe in the story of Androcles and his lion; and I have heard from good authority of a redbreast which had attached itself strongly to a labourer who had killed a viper which had attacked its nest, and that this redbreast acquired the habit of following the labourer about, and perching on his arm. There is, however, no end of such anecdotes as this, all supplying and evidencing the same conclusion.*

And now, lastly, for the world of reason. What weaknesses here! Reason, if we look to its purports and its legitimacies, is, no doubt, meant to have a no less influence over the rational animal, than instinct over the brute. Many of its conclusions are not less certain than those of instinct, and are far more important; and yet people believe, and do not. All faith is reason, or is supposed to be so, and is armed with all its strength. But how great still is its weakness! People desire happiness, a just and reasonable and necessary desire, and sanctioned by the whole law of the Creator himself. They know also with certainty, that vice and intemperance, of which they often see the fatal consequences at the very time when they are plunging into them, lead to misery. So also intellectually; they will often allow themselves to be seduced into error, rather than give themselves the pains of

* See what was said before on this subject, pp. 74, 75, and note *ibid.*

searching for truth. They will fight battles on principles of which they dare not analyse the foundations, because they are in behalf of their personal prejudices. And thus man, although the highest visible work of the Almighty hand, and said, and not without reason, if the words be properly understood, to be as a God in apprehension, may be said no less justly, if the case were not too mournful for laughter, to become the very laughing-stock of creation, through this interruption between his happy destiny, and the powers which were given him to work it out. The power has been given him to choose good, and to refuse evil. The evidence brought before him as to the nature of both, has been, at least in all ordinary conditions of human existence, altogether complete. All motives, from the very highest to almost the lowest, have combined to urge him to the right choice. And yet he has chosen ill. That freedom of will, which was bestowed to lead him by the only way to the best objects, has, like most abuses of the best gifts, carried him wrong. Reason, to him has, in fact, been an evil, because he has failed to use it: as is the strength or health also of the bodily powers, to those who employ them not to the purposes for which they were given.

What, then, are the conclusions which we may fairly derive from this incommensurableness, and at the same time this intermingling, of mechanism, of instinct, and of reason, one with another?

One of the first and most direct conclusions from this wonderful perfection of the material and instinctive, when compared with the moral and intellectual universe, is, that God proportions in all things (and this is one great proof of his design) the means and powers which he bestows, to the ends which he requires. He gives neither will nor power to mere mechanism. In all cases in which he exacts a moral will, he does give the moral or religious force or power to conduct it aright. But then, also, it is no less certain that whenever the human will comes in, error comes in along with it, and consequently that reason and faith must be made to work, though matter and instinct work of themselves.

Another conclusion is, that the use of that precious faculty of reason, which is in some sense God's greatest gift to mankind, may be expected, according to a very general analogy of his works, to require the greatest watchfulness and care, and perhaps the most in those persons who have cultivated the intellectual power in the greatest degree. For if this power be more apt to go wrong than the others, and this either through mistake or neglect, it should be the more carefully watched or disciplined. If we cannot trust to it, and the facts prove that we cannot, with the same confidence with which we trust to the law of instinct, or the law of gravitation, we should suspect it the more. But the way to watch it is, evidently, first to observe,

whether it have that real influence over our conduct which it ought to have; and next, whether or no that influence be in entire agreement with the universal laws of morality and religion. To violate these laws is both a defect of duty, and an aberration of reason itself, but yet an aberration into which sophistry, and commonly the sophistry of temptation, will often seduce. Reason and Faith *would*, if listened to, and realised, and followed out as they ought to be into their consequences, produce their effect with scarcely less of a necessity than that which we call strictly physical. But the liberty given to us to choose whether or no we will really listen to them, often turns us away. We have, therefore, to labour the more faithfully and industriously in that most important part of the work of both nature and grace in which God allows us to be fellow-workers with himself. Our own will, as we are told clearly by his word, is the province in which his agency is the most present and powerful; and our own reflections on our own hearts, may also, I think, serve to teach us that his agency is not less certain or cognizable in helping and guiding the moral regimen which he requires, than it is demonstrable from the mechanism of the human frame, or from the visible harmony in which the planets revolve.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Divine goodness.

I HAVE already, in speaking of the evidences of design in creation, referred, and made my first reference, to the argument, as brought forward by Socrates, and which, as brought forward by him, admits not, as I have said, of any sensible addition, and to which no minuteness of scientific research can add much confirmation.* The same great philosopher speaks, in like manner, of the tendencies to happiness, and of the means taken to produce it, as evidences of goodness, not less clear than the evidences of design. He observes that the senses, which are of divine contrivance, are inlets of pleasure, and that the gift of reason is the great gift which crowns the whole.† In the same manner Cicero, in the well-known chapters of the Tusculan Disputations, in which he speaks of philo-

* See before, pp. 20, 21.

† Mem. lib. i. chap. iv. sects. 5, 7, and see the passages referred to in note *, p. 80.

sophy as a divine gift, and a divine creation,* instances the benefits which have resulted from it to mankind, reckoning as its benefits the religious worship, the social justice, the moderation of spirit, the moral firmness, and the intelligence which it inspires. He afterwards enumerates the advantages derived to man from the vicissitude of day and night, the interchange of the seasons, the regularity of the motions of the heavenly bodies, and the position of the earth; from the temperature given to the atmosphere, from the vegetation of fruits, the growth of corn, the bursting out of fountains, the verdure of the grass, and the multitude of animals, bestowed partly for food, and partly for other uses which he particularises. He then recurs to man himself as the contemplator of all these great works of the divine hand, and repeats the fact that they are all made subservient to his utility.†

These recognitions of the tendencies of creation to utility or happiness are among its recognitions by heathenism. But the recognitions of this same truth in Scripture, grave as is the necessary character, and also independently of the divine authority of that holy book, are among the very clearest proofs which exist, of the general or rather universal prevalence of the same belief under all ordinary circumstances of human

* Inventum deorum. † Tusc. Disp. I. xxvi. xxviii.

existence. Our heavenly Father maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust.* He feedeth the fowls of the air, and we are better than they.† He knoweth all things that we have need of, and addeth them unto us.‡ He tells us that if we give good things unto our children, much more will he give good things to them that ask him.§ The greatest of the apostles recognises as a benefit, God's giving life and breath and all things to the creatures whom he hath made;‖ and speaks of the thankfulness due to him for those creations of his eternal power and godhead, for which, if not beneficial to us, no thankfulness could be due.¶ So also in the elder prophets, so all through the books of the Old Testament (and I would refer most particularly to the Book of Psalms), we have no doctrine more impressed, or more reiterated, than the declarations of God's goodness, and not to Jews only, but to all the children of men. These declarations, abstracting altogether, as I have said, the authority on which they come to us, are also the natural expression of the common feeling of mankind, the very commonness of which, even among the oppressed and afflicted portions of our mingled race, is a great proof of the truth and reality of the goodness which it affirms.

*Matt. v. 4, 5.
† *Ibid.*, vi. 26.
‡ *Ibid.*, vi. 32, 33.
§ *Ibid.*, vii. 11.
‖ Acts xvii. 25, and cf. 26, 27.
¶ Rom. i. 20.

We may, therefore, I think, hold the goodness of the Divine Being to be a point fully established by the most abundant and consentient proof imaginable. Whatever evil or unhappiness there may be in creation, there is happiness also. The exception or opposition which subsists to the good principle does not destroy or overwhelm it. The power and the wisdom of the Author of the universe were in the preceding chapters shown to be infinite. So also, and no less infinite, is his goodness also. And yet it must at the same time be allowed that both the moral and the physical proofs of the divine goodness, or of the existence and agency of a divine principle of good, although not in any degree impaired, are yet certainly contradicted by an exception which we do not see to have any place among the merely material or mechanical laws of the universe. Of all things which we can fairly suppose to have been designed in the material laws, we see not only much, but the whole, effected. None of these laws seem, so far as we can discern, to have any exception whatever. Any aberrations which go one way, are, as far as we can see, and we see enough to enable us to judge, exactly corrected or kept in balance by the compensations which are made in another way. Neither can we connect any suffering whatever with any of these aberrations. Or, if we have any reserve to make with regard to these very general and extensive positions, we yet

need make none which affects any principle of religion.*

But with regard to the law of happiness, both moral and physical, we do not see that this is the case. Immense contrivances and designs we do see, no doubt, for both these sorts of happiness. The good is infinite—there is not any doubt of that; and this infinite good is not abolished, nor yet, in perfect strictness of speech, actually lessened, by the like reality of even the most fearful amount of evil with which it may have to contend. But then again, on the other hand, we cannot say that the good principle always does conquer in the struggle between the two; and even though we reduce the amount of evil to the lowest possible degree, it still remains in its degree a blot in creation, of which it is impossible to assign the adequate cause, or to explain the existence. Neither yet is its degree trifling, either in the moral world or in the physical; either as it carries man to oppose the will of the Almighty, or as it may destroy his own earthly happiness. The great writer on Natural Theology to whom I referred in the preceding chapter, has ventured to assume that it is "a happy world after all."† I hope he is right. He was a man of a happy nature, and no doubt found it so. But I have known good men, and men who held to the doctrine of God's goodness as

* See before, pp. 38, 39.

† Paley's Natural Theology, p. 490.

firmly as he, who yet have accounted all such assertions as this of the actual happiness of human life as a bitter mockery; and I do not myself dare to put anything of the proof of the most essential doctrine of all religion on a basis which might be torn away from us by the decay of animal spirits, or of nervous fibre, or by the presence of any of those sad afflictions which religion is meant to console. We may reckon, in the first place, the affliction of bodily pain; but this, though there are very many instances of its great intensity, does not, I think, make up, by any means, the strongest case of real unhappiness. Then, again, there exists almost everywhere so much real woe under the mask of enjoyment, and also so much of distressing penury and just discontent, and still more, so much of jealousy and heartburning, and of the miseries both felt and inflicted by vice, that I do not dare to ground any part of the argument for the Creator's goodness on any balance between good and evil which comes within our common observation of human life and society.* The only ground, therefore, which I

* "Quod si quis Deus mihi largiatur, ut ex hâc ætate repueras eam, et in cunis vagiam, valde recusem; nec vero vèlim, quasi decurso spatio, ad carceres à calce revocari."— *Cato*, in *Cicero de Senectute*, cap. ult. Seneca also says, "hanc vitam, si scientibus daretur, neminem accepturum." See the note in Sumner's Records of the Creation, ii. 252; and see Wollaston's Religion of Nature, pp. 363–376, seventh edition. See also Archdeacon Hare's Life of Sterling, pp. lxxxix., xc., where

will here take to prove God's goodness is, to allege not the actual happiness of his creation, although I allow it to be great, and hope that it is greater than I see, but the *tendencies* to it; and among these, those tendencies in particular with which only our religion is properly concerned, namely, the tendencies of virtue to happiness; fully allowing, also, and recognising, at the same time, those of vice to misery. For these *tendencies* are at least all but universal, and are scarcely subject to any exception whatever. I am not certain that it might not be fairly said, although I do

the following reflection is subjoined—"The wonder and the cause for thankfulness is, that with all this there is a vein of genial life in nature, and a vivacious strength in human hopes and traditions, and a line of light in Christianity, that make it possible for any, however few, to teach that all these are the corruptions, not the constitutions, of humanity." "As far as human eyes can judge," observes Johnson, "the degree of evil might have been less, without any impediment to the good."—*Review of Soame Jenyns.* Dr. Henderson, an undoubted believer both in the goodness of God, and in his providence, makes the following observations in a recent work: —"We no sooner take a broad and impartial view of our condition . . . . . than we find that there is nothing within the wide range of the physical or the intellectual world, which is calculated to inspire us with confidence, or produce in our minds any feeling of well-grounded hope."—*Henderson's Lectures on Divine Inspiration*, p. 5. And the writer makes this startling, and, indeed, most untrue affirmation, very generally, and without reservation. But his making it at all shows clearly what the aspect is, which able men and considerable writers *may* take of this present world.

not venture to say it, that they are subject to none. A good man may not always be happy. Some infirmity of nature, or some distress or anxieties of other sorts, may prevent him from being so. But yet the direct effect of his goodness is almost always, or almost without any exception, to make him happy, so far forth as that goodness goes. He is almost always the happier for his goodness than he would otherwise be, and always the more acceptable through it to that God whose coupling of human happiness with human virtue and piety is the essential goodness for which we look to him in our religion, and also actually affords a religious foretaste of the future happiness which he reserves for his servants. Say, for example, that a good man is in want or pain. I will not affirm that a spirit of religious resignation will still make him a happy man, though it will often do that. But it will always *tend* to do so; and I suppose that this its tendency will always be in proportion to the degree in which it exists, although the obstacles will, no doubt, be in some cases greater, and in others less. Or, say that he is made miserable by domestic misfortunes or deprivations. But active effort for the public good, or any other wisely and religiously-directed moral design, tends to relieve even the misery so created. And so, I suppose, in every other instance whatever. Religion, almost always—and there is nothing else which does it in so high a degree—pays

itself. If it does not always make a man happy, it yet almost always makes him happier than he would be without it. And this effect of religion shows both a power and a design of happiness in its Author, of which the reality is not, I think, subject to any qualification whatever, and to which we may trust not less rationally or certainly than we trust to the power of gravitation to bring back an eccentric comet into its place, or to the effect of a frost in checking a flood. We have, moreover, always to bear in mind, that the happiness which God designs for us is a moral happiness,—that he is not in an earthly sense merely benevolent, but that his justice and his goodness are always absolutely and inextricably united one with the other.

The only difficulty, as it seems to me, which attaches to this conclusion, is as to the question of fact. The ratiocination, if the fact be as I have stated it, is clear enough. But it may be worth asking, whether that life of the conscience which makes a man good, does not also often disquiet and make him miserable. It must be granted, I think, that this is often the real case. To hold that the true religion, or that a sincere faith, must always be happiness, and to explain this tenet as importing that no man can be eminently good, or acceptable to God, to whom his religion does not actually bear, while he is on earth, that fruit of real happiness, with which it is fraught, is an extra-

vagance into which no tolerably sane observer of human nature can ever fall. To compare all the requirements of virtue, both active and passive, with its actual products is, and always must be, to many of the very best men, a too fertile source of anxiety. Vexations come across the serenest minds. Our virtues themselves are in earthen vessels, always liable to fracture or injury. Our infirmities pursue us into the regions of our strength. The creature cannot reach the height of the Creator, and the sensibilities which constitute, in natural order, the most efficient instruments of goodness, will yet often plunge into distress.

But then again, on the other hand, although in the imperfect state of training in which we exist, this is, and I suppose must be so, it yet is a defect in the training. The chief difficulty is in the *scrupulosity* of the conscience. But the *scrupulous conscience** is not that conscience which perfect faith, and perfect virtue, unite to approve. Even the enthusiasms of those divines, who claim an earthly efficacy for religion which it can scarcely ever, if ever, possess while we are on earth, have their root in a truth. Nothing can be more true than that if we at once keep the virtuous energy active, and the conscience wise, the disease of anxiety and scrupulosity dies away. It is not the natural, or the ordinary, though doubtless it

* See Jeremy Taylor's Ductor Dubitantium.

is the occasional, condition of good minds; and it is, moreover, almost limited to those persons who, whether from choice or from circumstances, have been led to cultivate the intellectual and the speculative habits of mind at the expense of the practical. It is altogether a marvel, and a signal proof of the value of practical habits, and, I think, a remarkable instance of the providential superintendence and regulation always acting on good men, that men of these habits have it so little. St. Paul, though probably a man of as speculative a genius as any man ever called into any very active position in the Christian life ever was, and of a mind which turned very much inward on itself, had it not.* It is not, therefore, I think, a real exception to what I have said of the all but universal tendency of goodness to happiness, to allow that there are some good men, who yet do not find even their own consciences the friends they ought to be. The unhappiness of these men is not in reality caused by any evil which flows out of their good, but takes its rise in the evil produced by the error mingled with their good. If it can be shown that a man who makes any such choice as that of Hercules, incurs by making it any calculable chance of a real loss, or that the desertion of his duty makes him happier than he would be in the practice of it, or that he really gains more by

* See St. Paul's Epistles, I may say *passim;* but especially Phil. i. 19-23.

vice than he would gain by virtue, I give up my case. But if the mind be, as it is, the man, these things will not be proved: and until these things be proved, that tendency of goodness to happiness, for which we have a right to repose our confidence in the Author of them both, remains undisturbed. And, further still, if God does all this here, amid all the turbulences and distractions with which we are surrounded on earth,* much more may we confide that he will keep every trust which we commit to him against that future day,† which he has taught us to expect, and to our belief in which he leads us not only by express revelation, but also by the analogy in which we rightly trust that none of his prospective contrivances are ever without an object, or shall miss completion.

* In fæce Romuli. † 2 Tim. i. 12.

CHAPTER VIII.

The same subject continued.

THIS, then, is our proof. We prove both God's goodness and God's power in everything essential to our religious belief, by thus proving that human happiness is always, or at least with exceptions altogether inconsiderable, and this under divine guidance, both the tendency of human virtue, and also its effect. And this, strictly speaking, is enough for the argument. I will now proceed to show that not only happiness is thus always * the tendency of goodness itself, but also that many other tendencies are made to co-operate with it; and that these united tendencies, and that of virtue especially, do actually produce the effect in a very high degree.

I will, therefore, request the reader to bring, as nearly as he can, before his eye, some country village which he may happen to know, in which the ordinary

* Pro tanto.

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succours are given to distress; and in which provision is made for due instruction in the duties both of law and religion; in which vice is discountenanced, and in which those infectious sympathies of brotherly-kindness, which are scarcely ever barren of fruit, *never* barren, I suppose, when proffered by the higher ranks to the lower, are found to prevail. Such a village as this we may always, I think, assume to be a really happy village, especially, perhaps, amongst the lower ranks, who are, of course, the more confined to it, and the less exposed to adverse influences from any extraneous cause. We have here a proof from the fact, that the God who intended this village to be a happy village, has had the power no less than the will to make it so. I was once told by a venerable country clergyman, who was certainly disposed to be very full on this theme, "There is not a finger now aching in this parish."

Or let us take again, in the same manner, one of those insulated manufacturing establishments, which are under the control of a humane master, and abstracted from the temptations of great towns. It is plain, plain to the eye, that happiness is here the law, misery the exception.

Lastly, let us take one of these towns themselves. The picture, considering it as a picture, which it presents to the philanthropist, is doubtless unpleasing. I do not say that his eye may not deceive him, as taking

in, not the the whole, but only a part of the case. I do not deny, but believe, that there may be country districts quite as bad as the worst towns. But yet the spectator does see, no doubt, much real evil. He is met at every turn both by a vice and a misery which he finds it hard to reconcile with that belief in the superabounding goodness of God, which he has inherited from his childhood, and which he longs to indulge. I will no more deny, than I will altogether concede, that the balance is, in far too many such cases, for evil, and not for good. I will not dare, as I have already said, or implied,* to put this argument on a basis which may be distorted in one way by a sanguine imagination, and in another way by a too melancholy appreciation of the facts on which it rests. But it is not the less certain, that even in the worst and lowest scenes of life, the same virtue and religion, which must be always the best happiness of even a true Arcadia, have their reward; or that the intention of Providence to give to honesty, sobriety, and purity a value in their results, and also to give an efficient consolation for temporal evils in the promise of futurity, is borne out by success. This success is not the less real, because it cannot be fully understood and appreciated, except by the moral and religious mind; and it is, moreover, a success which argues a

* See p. 94.

power over misfortune and evil, which we cannot regard with less wonder, or a less implicit confidence in its Author and original, than that with which we look up to the mighty arm which launched the planets in their several orbits, and brings light and darkness in their turns.

It is also to be observed, that this same Providential power thus manifested, is shown, in this moral manifestation of it, to be a power far more intimately conversant with all our own directly human feelings and necessities, than we could at all know it to be from only seeing its operation on the physical world. A labourer well and religiously brought up falls into distress, but has a kind master. The kindness shown in giving the relief which he needs, and the gratitude for receiving it, will often much more than balance the pain of the distress. Carelessness or intemperance has reduced the strong man's frame from health to disease; and the unhealthiness of the atmosphere in which he is compelled to live may prevent his recovery. But he may have more than a compensation in the affections of his family, in the resignation with which he has learned to bow to necessity, and in that submission to the will of the Almighty which may have first been taught him by his disease itself. The oppressions inflicted on the early Christians served to bring out their regards for each other. The memorable saying, "See how these Christians love one an-

other," pointed to a feeling to which those oppressions gave birth. But the love so produced was both a good and a happiness which overbore those oppressions themselves. And so also, perhaps, in almost all suffering, provided our submission to the law of the universe, which with all who believe in God is the same thing with submission to God's will, be what that law ordains it to be. I have not said that the intent of this law is enough borne out in its effect, always really to make the happiness of what we call the unhappy fortunes or circumstances of life more than the misery. What I have said is, that its intention is nevertheless manifest, and that it operates enough in fact to prove the intention: and also with a power over the disturbing forces opposed to it, be they what they may, in which, while we make it our object, and especially our delight, or *love*, to follow the divine will, we may safely confide. To the power which does so much we may reasonably trust our *all*. Also, if we see that this powerful intention acts so largely in this embarrassed world, to make virtue happy, and to educe good from evil, we may further argue from that analogy of progress which Nature exhibits in all her works, that it will do far more in the future existence which we are taught to expect, and to which we know not that the embarrassments of this world apply, and from which also it is the general belief of mankind

that the future world is free.* Almost all these disturbing forces or embarrassments flow, moreover, almost

* On recurring to that pregnant mine of thought which is to be found in the invaluable writings of Bishop Butler, I find in part i. chap. iv. of the Analogy, the following passages:—"And we certainly are in a condition which *does not seem*, by any means, the most advantageous we could imagine, or desire, either in our natural or moral capacity, for securing either our present or future interest. However, this condition, low and careful and uncertain as it is, does not afford any just ground of complaint. For as men may manage their temporal affairs with prudence, and so pass their days here on earth in tolerable ease and satisfaction, by a moderate degree of care; so likewise with regard to religion, there is no more required than what they are well able to do, and what they must be greatly wanting to themselves if they neglect."—Pp. 111, 112. And, so again, p. 114:—"Our happiness and misery are trusted to our conduct, and made to depend upon it. Somewhat, and in many circumstances a great deal too, is put upon us, either to do, or to suffer, as we choose, and all the various miseries of life which people bring upon themselves by negligence and folly, and might have been avoided by proper care, are instances of this: which miseries are beforehand just as contingent and undetermined as their conduct, and left to be determined by it." See also both the preceding and the intermediate passages. These observations appear to me to bear out completely, as stated above, the reasonableness of reposing our proof of the divine goodness, not on the proof of the absolute happiness, or the balance of happiness, of the world at large, or of human society, but on that of the connection between happiness and goodness which the divine law has established. "Under these qualifications," observes Archbishop Sumner, "I shall endeavour to show, not that the human race is in the best con-

visibly out of the existence of general laws, which are good on the whole, and among the many utilities of which it is to be remarked that they are a very essential element in our proof of contrivance. Contrivance is an accommodation to them, and the consummate skill of the artist is often coupled with the intractableness of the material with which he has to deal.*

It will probably be observed that I have in this chapter left wholly untouched an argument for human happiness which is very commonly drawn from the universal prevalence of the love of life and the fear of death. We should not, it is said, either love the one or fear the other, if life were unhappy. But it does not seem to me that we have a right to lay much, if any, weight on this argument. The common feeling on which it is grounded appears to me to be rather instinctive than rational, and to be akin to the impulses which prompt the horse or the dog to struggle through difficulties, rather than based on any calculation of consequences. This feeling appears also to be in general not less strong in those persons whose lives appear to be the least happy, than in the happiest,

ceivable condition, or that no evils accompany the law which regulates their increase, but that this law makes, on the whole, an effectual provision for their general welfare."—*Records of the Creation*, ii. 139.

* See Paley's Natural Theology, pp. 43, 62.

and is often weakest in those who have cultivated the rational part of their nature the most. But though this argument will not, I think, bear out the conclusion thus drawn from it, it is not the less true that the instinct on which it relies is a useful instinct, an instinct which mitigates evil, and does good, and tends naturally both to invigorate, and to sweeten, our prosecution of all those ends which help to sustain the life which we love, and in our conduct of which we rest our hopes of a better.

I may, I think, add, before I finally quit this subject of instinct, that there does not appear to exist in the whole compass of the creation any one symptom of anything which can fairly be called a principle of *instinctive misery*, while, on the contrary, the principle of *instinctive happiness* may be discerned in every portion of it. Of misery itself,* there is doubtless much, much for which we cannot account, or of which it is hard or impossible to imagine why it exists, or why in so great a degree; much to which the indulgence of the natural instincts themselves may be seen to lead. But still we cannot see that any one instinct is implanted throughout the whole of creation, either in man, or in the brute animals, which has not on the whole a useful and a happy design (even the bites of venomous animals have that in relation to the

* See the preceding chapter, pp. 93, 94, and note *, p. 94. This will be more fully shown also in the next chapter.

animal itself), or of which the evils which arise out of their abuse, or over indulgence, may not safely be referred to the operation of general laws, which also are useful or happy on the whole. There is at least something of a reason, or apparent reason, for everything which instinct ever does or attempts; it may be hard to make this out to be what has been called a sufficing reason, or to justify the consequences, but we can assign the cause. There *is* an end, which is something else than the contingent misery of which we grant the existence. The cow may suffer more of pain from the loss of her calf than she gains of pleasure from its birth, but that pain is not the cause of implanting her fondness for it.

On the other hand, however, the happiness which is derived from instinct is an end in itself. Very much so, doubtless, in brutes, although the theory of their enjoyments is mingled up with too many inquiries to be entered into here. But take a healthy infant: mark his carol, his spontaneous laugh, his bounding alacrity; or mark him afterwards, when his instinctive curiosity about a thousand things which never can be of any physical use to him, or anything but an amusement, begins to awake. All this is happiness; and this is clearly the design itself with which it is given, the very same design which is evident in the songs of birds, in the taste for music, and in the colouring of flowers. Or take, again, the mere labourer, a man who

is hard worked, and made to work by rigid necessity; yet he, too, has an instinctive pleasure in getting through with his work, a pleasure which is so much gratuitous happiness superadded to the work itself, or a happiness which can have no cause, except that, by and for itself, subject only to the higher moral ends which it was meant to serve, it was the Creator's design. I believe that both the moral and the physical benefit and happiness of the *instincts* of the less intellectual classes of mankind might be made a very large, and discursive, and useful field of inquiry, both to the moralist and the divine.

But to proceed. It is further to be remarked of instinct that, in at least the immense majority of its operations, it operates in the way of appetency or desire, which, of course, is always the appetency of either real or imagined good, not in the way of dread or alarm. And it is also to be observed, that what is sometimes hastily called an instinctive dread of anything, is commonly (I do not say always) rather to be accounted of as a rational, or what is supposed to be a rational, apprehension of something opposed to our natural instincts, than as an instinct in itself. A child will shrink with what is sometimes called instinctive fear from a precipice, but this is not because he has any natural instinct with regard to the precipice itself, but because he has learned to couple danger with the going too near it. A very inexperi-

enced child might be apt to run over it without feeling any apprehension at all. But if instincts are thus almost always an appetency for real or supposed good, they are a happy provision. "This shows, moreover," as has been well observed, "in an eminent manner, both the wisdom, and the goodness of our Creator, that we should so be led to the pursuit of these objects, when we either do not make, or are not capable of making, just and proper reflections on their tendencies."*

This argument may also be carried much further, and even into the province of reason itself. It has been well observed,† and it is one of the most signally happy characteristics of the Christian religion, that the motives with which it is chiefly busied are motives of inducement, not of *denouncement*. Denouncement of course there is, and must be. In a world in which there is much vice, the principle of fear must be invoked as a motive for forsaking it. But in this, our heavenly religion, it is nevertheless exceedingly remarkable in how great a degree both happier and holier motives are made prominent. To *draw*, not to *drive*, is the impulse which we clearly see to have

* Inquiry into the Origin of Human Appetites and Affections, in Dr. Parr's collection of Metaphysical Tracts, p. 96.

† See Sumner's Records of the Creation, vol. ii. pp. 185–191; and Lord Brougham's Notes on Paley's Natural Theology, vol. ii. p. 138.

been most at work in every one of the New Testament writers, in all their exhortations, either to practise virtue, or to forsake vice, and eminently so in their blessed Master himself. And we may also see it* to be the more effective impulse of the two. But what I would here observe more particularly is, that it is certainly a very happy part of the constitution of our nature that it should be made so. It has been observed, and apparently is true, that people never enjoy so much of pleasure as they sometimes suffer from pain. And yet pleasure, good, happiness, not the avoidance of pain, is what they are chiefly found to seek. This is, in itself, a most beneficent instinct. Hope is an instinct, and it is very remarkable that our religious instincts in particular should indicate so much of hope and cheerfulness as they commonly do. We might have expected, prior to experience, and merely making inferences from what we see of the theory of the case, that the awe which invests the contemplation of immortality, and of the immeasurable importance to us of all that we do, and of all that we omit, and of all the high attributes of an infinite and holy God, would rather have the effect of overwhelming our minds with terror and dismay, than of enlivening them with hope and with joy. This is not the case, and I am also persuaded, ought not to be the case; but still it is

* See what will be said in chapter xii.

very remarkable that it is not. We see in general that good men, though very humble in their own estimate of themselves, are yet very cheerful in mind, disposed to look out for instances of God's goodness, rather than at his threatenings or severities: almost to *presume* that they will meet in heaven the friends whom they have lost on earth. Also in the expectations which they form of their own hereafter, conscious as they are of much imperfection, conscious of sin, and usually perfectly aware that Christ has not wrought anything out, except for those who have also worked for themselves, the instances of distressing apprehension and anxiety are surprisingly few. I am not arguing the reasonableness of all this, although I am convinced that a provision at once so beneficent and so extensive has a root in God's real goodness to his creatures, of which we must not doubt the reality. And I also fully acknowledge that some of the insensibilities which we see in bad men to their own demerits are altogether monstrous, and among the most shocking of all the enormities which the extravasations of salutary laws out of their proper province are found to produce. But that the provision is a most merciful and happy provision in itself, and demands our very greatest thankfulness to him who has made it for us, cannot be doubted.

It is also to be remarked, that a very large portion of those *inducements* to virtue which God bestows on

us, and especially of those which he bestows on the best men, consists in the impulses communicated or excited through the moral and kindly affections themselves. Zeal to do good in any country neighbourhood to which we are bound by personal connection, or for the establishment or improvement of useful institutions in any particular town; or for any larger public interests than these which we may be able to promote; the desire to train a child in God's service, and to save him from evil—the study of truth—the suppression of error—the satisfaction of believing or hoping that we may be able to impart that knowledge, especially that religious knowledge, to others, of which we are conscious that it is a blessing to ourselves;—all these motives are *inducements*, and almost universally happy inducements, to the acts to which they prompt. But they are also still more, inasmuch as they are *improvements* also, or constitute in themselves a religious education of the mind on which they act, or in which they reside, and are for this reason the more characteristic indication of both the moral wisdom and the benevolence of that holy Being who has implanted them in our nature and fosters them in our minds.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Principle of Evil.

It has been sufficiently shown in the preceding chapters that God is infinitely and immeasurably wise and powerful, and also of a goodness not less infinite and immeasurable. It has also been shown that though the existence of evil wars, as doubtless it does, and in the degree in which it subsists, wars fearfully, on the principle of good, it does not destroy this principle. Evil is a painful, and, I am ready to confess, a perplexing enemy; but still there *is* immense, and infinite, and evidently designed, good and happiness also; and, therefore, the only questions which remain to us are the two following: First. *Why*, if God's power, and wisdom, and goodness are alike infinite, does he not suppress all evil absolutely and for ever?* and, secondly, supposing that we cannot answer this question satisfactorily, what account can we give of either the con-

* "Aut vult, et non potest, aut potest et non vult."—*Lactantius de irâ Dei*, cap. 13.

trasts or the relations which subsist between evil and good? Some account or explanation on this subject we shall still have to look for, on which to ground both that present tranquillity of mind, and that hope of the future, which God's goodness, taken by itself, must doubtless will us both to deserve and attain.

I. To the first, then, of these two questions: "Why does not God suppress all evil altogether?" we must frankly confess that no direct answer can be given. It is the great religious problem of all ages and countries, and not to be regarded without anxiety. Ahriman and Eblis, and the doctrine of the impracticability of matter, are nothing but vain efforts to escape from it: and our Saviour himself has recognised, if we may not say the personal existence of the Jewish Satan, yet certainly that of the principle which he represents. But still all this is only saying or admitting that the principle exists. Why it exists, or rather under what necessity, is still a question wholly insoluble. It is not, however, the less certain, or the less universally admitted, that Ahriman, or Eblis, or Satan, is not GOD. Even if the empire of good and evil be divided, and evil reign more than half,* HE still is the infinitely good, the wise, and the powerful; or of a goodness, wisdom, and power on which we may rely safely as the rule both of heaven and earth, and a rule to which

* Paradise Lost, iv. 112.

all real or seeming exceptions will be more than compensated to all who study to conform themselves to his will. That this is really a truth in which we may safely confide, I. need not here argue over again.* And, indeed, if it be anywhere doubted, it is only among tribes who are sunk in the lowest brutality, and whom the exceptional misery of their own condition has seduced into the offering worship to demons rather than to God. Even the Demiurge, though nothing less than an actual creator, and filled with evil, was supposed to be subject to the good principle, and to be controlled by him.

II. I come now, therefore, to the second and subordinate question, but still the only question to which we need feel ourselves concerned to seek for an answer; namely, the question whether, though it be beyond our power to say why evil exists, there still be not characters and circumstances of the contrast between good and evil, or in the relations which they bear to each other, which may relieve us sufficiently from all moral perplexity of mind, so far as either our own tranquillity, or our dependence on God's goodness, is any way concerned. And here I do say that, whatever opinions we may entertain on the former question, or as to the existence of evil in general, it is not the less certain, and we have abundant proof, that good is

* See the preceding chapter.

the law of creation, and that evil is its breach; that all order is for good, and that evil is disorder; that it is an evident design of the system under which we live, that the good principle should come in to relieve and redeem the evil, which, from whatever cause, is found to subsist; and that the reality, and also the success, of this design is borne out by the fact. In speaking of the fact, I do not mean to affirm that there is actually more good than evil: for that, as I have said before, is an inquiry in which I forbear to engage; nor yet do I say that specific difficulties may not exist in particular cases which we cannot explain. But yet I think that we can establish the principle, that good tells always, or with exceptions which amount, at most, only to incomprehensibilities, as the object of, or as in concert with, law or design; which evil is not: and this to an extent which will justify every confidence which we can repose in God the designer, and our utmost gratitude for his benefits. Among these benefits I, of course, include the future life which he bestows on us, and also our present anticipation of it. This world would, I allow, be only a dark enigma, if we were to exclude that life from our contemplation.* We take an untrue estimate of what now is if we do not think of its tendencies. We *have* that life, and as Christians we have also our

* Degerando du Perfectionnement Moral, chap. x.

redemption into it, put before us; and we cannot reasonably treat what is as what is not. We cannot be immortals and mortals too. All these tendencies, these future and immortal tendencies of what now is, are always in close analogy to our present experiences. We see two children: the one of them exclaims, "I am so happy." The other may be led in some fit of passion, or by some sudden disappointment, to exclaim, "I am so miserable." We all look on the happy child as fulfilling the order of nature, or providence, and on the other as contradicting it. But the child's happiness is either the instinctive and implanted feeling of his age, or is the result of experience. And so also afterwards in our religion. I suppose that all minds, unless in some way distorted, have what may be almost called a natural tendency to a religious faith, or a tendency which amounts to something more than the results of any actually reasoned out inferences from the evidences brought before them.* Say that it is an intuition; say that it is an innate idea; say that it is an experience. I meddle not with *what* it is, but only affirm that it is, or the fact of its existence. And this we *may* affirm. We can hardly imagine any human society so degraded, as not to feel that it is right and becoming to be kindly rather than

* "There is an inward tasting of truth, which is very much different from a sort of assent which is only extorted by force of argument."—*Bishop Burnet in Granger's Letters*, p. 221.

oppressive, or to be readier to receive the missionary who tells us of God, than the Fetiche who teaches to worship the devil. But this difference arises independently of any formal process of reasoning, either from impressions on the natural susceptibilities which it is not easy to trace, or from the traditionary belief which has been instilled. But in either case it is the order of nature, and therefore of God. Or let us take up, for the sake of more particular and exact example, cases in which we may suppose the evil and the good to be exactly balanced. We know that draining, manuring, fencing, and cultivating, either bring out in the soil an aptitude for bearing its fruit, or tend to protect the crop from injury. Let us suppose, then, that storms and inundations do exactly as much harm as these operations of the industrious husbandman do good. Or, let us say that a tyrant does exactly as much harm in the nation which he governs, as the law which he may still profess to administer, does good. An equal balance, some might say, between those principles of good and evil, which hold a divided empire in the world. Be it so. Yet still there *is* a principle of good; and there is also more than the mere existence of that principle. Ask even the husbandman, whose hopes are disappointed, and he will himself tell you that it was the intention of nature to bring them to bear. Ask the slave who is unjustly thrown into a dungeon, and he will un-

equivocally acknowledge that it was the intention of the law to protect him from injury. And this, independently of all specific education, and of all theories of the equal liberties of mankind. All these persuasions are derived from common, or I should rather say universal, sympathies, of which, however originating, or however obscured by an unnatural scepticism, or overborne by vice or passion, the universality proves the reasonableness and the truth.

Thus much of what we may call nature. But when we come to direct morals or religion, the case is still stronger. The man who accepts the moral or religious order and intention of Providence as the ruling principle or object of his life, finds almost all evil, as far as he himself is personally concerned, vanish away. A good servant finds no real unhappiness in submitting to hard and even painful work, if it be in the service of a master whom he loves, and in whose cause he is zealous. And so, in a still greater degree, religious faith, when in its perfection, overcometh the world; and if to be had in a sufficiently advanced degree in a world unenlightened by Christianity, might still overcome it, even without Christ. We do not suppose that Socrates was unhappy. Temptation, no doubt, is always to evil; but then faith and love together conquer temptation; and though the weakness of nature will sometimes prevail over the most enlightened and generous

principle, yet that principle is renewed by repentance, and the weak becomes strong. It were easy to go on to show in detail how much the gratitude, and faith, and mental tranquillity of religion, especially when joined with the hope of a happy immortality,* overbear the afflictions which they teach us to support, and how positively happy they will often render even a feeble mind in its darkest days of misery and distress.

It is, moreover, to be observed, that in a universe governed by general laws, the worst evils are commonly the natural reaction of principles evidently intended to lead us to good. I do not attempt to explain why this must be so, nor to say that this principle will account satisfactorily for all the difficulties which beset the case. But it will account for much. Disease, for example, is commonly the result of a neglect, either by ourselves or our parents, of those moral and prudential laws which have been given to preserve our health, and promote our happiness, and lead us to virtue. It is also by far the most direct and influential of all the warnings which are given us that we do not neglect these laws or principles; and it is also certainly not too strong for the effect designed.

Again, one of the greatest of all miseries, and I will

* Phil. iii. 8.

add, of all difficulties, is the ingratitude of children, and that disappointment of natural affection which even the best and kindest parents often sustain. A son, whom his father has made the very first object of his own tenderness, and for whom he has toiled early and late, is led by the evil company into which he has fallen to treat that father with neglect or aversion. The law of sympathy with his equals in age, or his companions in vice, has broken through the force of instruction and the tie of blood. I cannot pretend to explain or to imagine why the system of general laws, in which this misery doubtless takes its rise, should be permitted to include this mischievous consequence, or to operate thus unrestrainedly. But still the inducements which carry the parent to train the child both wisely and affectionately are not, after all, too strong or too multiplied; and we may also see, or *hope*, that all such training *commonly* has its reward.

Of another most distressing evil, and the more distressing because it is exclusively religious, namely, of the torment often inflicted even on good men by a too scrupulous conscience, I have already spoken in a preceding chapter.* That much of this anxiety in good men is mental disease, I need not repeat. It is the counterpart which naturally emanates from those

* P. 98, *et seq.*

general laws* which guide us in the way in which we ought to go, and sustain us in the going. It may be very possible that we could not have had the good without the evil; and I have already shown that the appropriate remedy for this evil is in a life of activity —a life which, if we include in it the active pursuit of truth, as well as of other more secular ends, is always a duty, and a duty to which men may be sometimes prompted even by this evil itself. I may also add that the inducements, of which even the over-sensitive conscience is one, to lead this life, or to take this remedy, are identical with the whole principle of religion itself. If there be any such thing as religious fear, this is it, only operating without its due admixture of cheerfulness and hope. We know, however, that in most cases this principle does not operate enough, and, therefore, that an excess of it must sometimes be expected to exist, according to those same laws of both the moral and material universe by which the Almighty, as far as we can discern his operation, always works.

It is also further to be observed, that the over-scrupulous conscience, whether it be a difficulty or not, certainly is not a difficulty by which the heathen world, or at least that portion of the heathen world of the history and opinions of which we are best in-

* Pp. 106, 107.

formed, was ever embarrassed. The authority of conscience may, I suppose, be said to be sufficiently recognised in all the best moral writings which have come down to us both from Greece and from Rome. Or, even if this were not so, yet conscience is a principle too closely interwoven with our nature not to exist and have influence, though sometimes sunk in error, and at other times enlightened by truth, in every state of society which can be named. Also the belief in a divine regimen of the mind, in the duty of obeying the will of God or the gods, and in a future state, is, and always has been, almost universal among mankind. And passages may be found in ancient writers which connect men's duty to the gods with practical virtue, in a language and a philosophy to which even the believer in Christianity is glad to recur, as exhibiting the consonance between his own revealed belief and that elder law of the same almighty Author whose holy will, whether darkly indicated or clearly seen, is, or should be, the final object of all religions. But still I do not think that there exists anywhere, except in Christianity, any record whatever of any apprehension existing in any good man's conscience, that the merely imperfect discharge of the moral duties of life can either be offensive to the God or gods whom he worships, or call down punishment on him in the future world. That crime, or

that flagrant vice, will call down punishment; or that he will be punished for the omission of the ritual, or the sacrifices enjoined by his creed, was sufficiently plain. Conscience spoke to him then, if not with the same clearness and energy with which it speaks to us, yet so as to make itself recognised.* But it never seems to have told him that he would offend the gods by not being virtuous enough, or that moral omissions are sins. Of this truth, though really not less clear to an enlightened intellect, when the attention has once been directed to it, than any other maxim of the moral code, we have but few traces in all antiquity, and I scarcely think that I could point out any direct acknowledgment of it. The maxim of the philosopher—"Either it will be well with me, or I shall cease to be"—does not seem to have had in any religious mind any exception whatever. Every religious man's conscience will doubtless have in a degree reproached him at times for failure in duty, or for not having done all which it was in his power to do. His habitual benevolence, or his code of law, or, indeed, his religion, will, at

* See Lucretius, v. 1217, &c.—

Regesque superbi
Conripiunt Divôm perculsi membra timore,
Ne quod ob admissum fœdè, *dictumve superbe*,
Pœnarum grave sit solvendi tempus adactum.
Ibid., 1221–1224.

times, have taught him as much as that. But we have no indication that he ever carried on this feeling into any degree of religious anxiety, or that these omissions ever humbled him before God. Our own clearer perceptions on this great point we owe, as far as we can discover, to Christianity, and to the foreshadowings of Christianity in Judaism, solely and practically.

On the utility of these perceptions, and even their necessity to any perfect scheme or code, either of morals or of religion, I need not enlarge. But with the benefit derived from the possession of the truth contained in them, we must apparently, by the law of nature, take also the penalty of not always appreciating it exactly as we ought. It is a wheel which, to prevent it from going too slow in a thousand instances, we allow to go too fast in one.

We have also to consider, that Christianity, if rightly understood, does much to mitigate this very evil, nay, to remove it. The great doctrine of Christianity is the doctrine of *forgiveness*, the doctrine that he who has made us weak considers whereof we are made; and that though we fail to do the good which we would, and do too often the evil which we would not,* he yet introduces into the same conscience which tells us of our sin the knowledge that his great

* Rom. vii. 19.

mercy extends to the pardoning of it. If the heathen conscience was less acute, so too was its knowledge of the divine benignity less evidenced, and less particular. Moreover, also it had not the seal of that actual manifestation of the great mercy of the Redeemer which we have received.

CHAPTER X.

Of the eduction of Good from Evil.

Good therefore exists, and evil also. To combine them in one whole is a task beyond the power of man, a task which reason cannot undertake, and which in all ages, though it has often excited, has always baffled, the imagination. This vain attempt, moreover, though it may be dictated by the most laudable motives, is not by any means innocent in its effects. To attempt to unite these opposite principles in one whole, or in one necessity, is to approach to the identifying them, to the putting evil for good, and good for evil, and consequently to weaken by a visionary refinement, not the less visionary because it may seek to dignify itself with the name of philosophy, the healthy feeling of every plain mind that there is an utter discrepancy between the two.

On this, however, I need not enlarge. Good and evil are hostile principles—always interfering—never one; and what has been proved respecting them is,

that though both are immense, and I will not undertake to enter into any comparison of the one with the other, the design of creation is, nevertheless, as far as we are capable of discerning, always for good; or at any rate that if, in so extensive a field of observation any exception to this rule can be discovered by a perverse ingenuity, it is too inconsiderable to be taken into account.

I will now proceed to show further, and by alleging various particular and practical instances, that the good which comes in, and is called forth, for the particular purpose of relieving the evil which subsists in society, actually does much to redeem, and will often even do more than redeem it; and therefore, in estimating the design of creation, must of course be taken into our account. The evil, doubtless, is deplorable. It has been said that the chief occupation of the virtues of some men is to bind up the wounds which have been inflicted by the vices of others. The observation is true; and while the vice exists, I do not say that the evil can be overtaken—I do not think that it can.

But then this same true observation has also its converse. How great still is that good which *is* called into existence and action by the very evil which wars with it! How great is that virtue which *does* bind up those wounds both of the body and the mind which

have been inflicted either by vice or misfortune! How much greater the moral good, and I might add, the happiness, of that virtue, than the harm, or real misery, of any of those *physical* evils, to speak in the first place of physical evils only, which it comes in to alleviate!

Let us take, in the first instance, the evil of poverty. This is a physical evil: it may be brought on by vice, or may arise partly out of vicious institutions of society; but however brought on, it is a physical evil in itself clearly enough. I say, then, that the benevolence which relieves poverty, or which carries men into the pursuit of the means of relieving it, is a great good. It leads men, who might otherwise be indolent, into active life; that is a great good in itself; and it also sanctifies that life, which is a greater good still. It is also certain that the suscipient of the relief thus procured for him obtains, in addition to the physical relief administered, a moral happiness from the administration, which is of the very highest value. The consideration shown for his case, and shown by a superior, checks the harshness of any discontent with either the order of nature, or the law of property, which he might otherwise indulge; it amalgamates ranks, and breathes a spirit of equanimity, which, if the greatest happiness be the happiness of the mind, more than matches the evils which it consoles. Also poverty, though in a less degree I suppose than sick-

ness, tends to direct the mind to God, to feed in thought on those innumerable bounties which it believes to be at his right hand, and on the world in which they will be enjoyed. Surely this is not better only, but also happier, than to be distracted by any affluence of what are called earthly blessings from the cultivation and enjoyment of religion.

But now of sickness itself. I believe that, *in most cases*, the compensations more than make up for the evil. I do not mean that any compensations for sickness put the patient in so good a state as that of a man who can direct the services of a healthy body to the discharge of the duties of a well-employed mind. No other earthly happiness do I suppose to be equal to that. But what I mean is, that, taking the averages of human happiness and misery, I do not think that the sickly occupy a very low rank among those averages; and that I also think that their sickliness itself is what keeps them from ranking lower than they do. If a man's sickness be brought on him by his own imprudence, it teaches him thought, gives him experience; and he may so acquire more real happiness than he would else have had. Then, again, sickness not only demands, but also creates, sympathy. The kind nurse will often have an affection for the object of her charge, which makes her nurture of him more a pleasure than a pain. Still greater is the pleasure which it gives to the patient himself. "How can I

ever repay you for this?" is a question which he often asks. The kindness which he would repay is a kindness which not only mitigates the distemper of his body, but also soothes the needs of his heart, and may make him happier than if he had never been afflicted. So in the case of a son who sits by the bedside, and grasps the hand, of an infirm mother. She has actually more pleasure in seeing the tenderness thus called out in her son, and called out perhaps at an age in which the buoyancy of youthful spirits is often too unfavourable to the gentler impressions, than she feels of pain in any suffering which she may endure. It is also among the happinesses, and is indeed the very first happiness, of sickness, that it serves more and more certainly than anything else to call the man home to himself, to show him the world in its true light, to lead him to be thankful for the means given him to see it in that light, and thus to love God the better for his visitation. I am not assuming in this chapter the truth of Christianity. All that I have here affirmed may, I suppose, be done and seen under any form of religion, be it what it may. But I may still add, that if the man whom we have now placed before us be a Christian, and his sufferings serve, as they often do, to create in him a more habitual sense or conviction of the surpassing goodness of Him who suffered for mankind; and of God's mercy, so more evidenced through Him, than in anything else, for hu-

man offences; the reward is ample, and the purchase —nothing. It is also to be considered that a life of *sickness* is not by any means to be regarded as identical with a life of *suffering*. There are, indeed, some sad, most sad, cases, to which I am willing to shut my eyes, and into which I do not enter. But in the great majority of instances, sickliness, or indeed sickness, is, I hope, little more than infirmity. The infirm may often *suffer* less than the strong: and at the same time infirmity alone will often have the same effect with suffering in quieting the agitations of a restless mind, and of vehement pursuit, and of directing us to our best object, and our final home.

I am now come to the far more difficult case of the degree of good (and this I suppose to be in all cases moral good) which even moral evil may, in some instances, serve to produce. That there is such a good is evident. Without moral evil there can be no repentance. Repentance is a good, and I will not say that the stimulant which it creates may not in many cases do more good than the evil which has given occasion to it has done harm. But still there is room for at least a doubt how far it can compensate on the whole the moral blessing of innocence. I do not suppose that it can compensate this blessing in those who make innocence itself that cause of thankfulness which it ought to be, and the basis of that edifice of good works with which it should be crowned. But still the

evil for which we repent *is* met, and neutralised, at the very least in part, and is often, we may hope, conquered by the repentance.

Thus far of the existence of evil, both moral and physical, and of our means of contending with it. But then there is a greater difficulty still than its mere existence. Granting its mere existence to be useful, or even necessary,—and it is no way hard or unreasonable to suppose that it may be even a necessity of our moral nature to have to fight against it,—yet why have we so much? A world actually without evil, or without a degree of evil, against which even the good mind has in some way or other need to contend, would be a world so utterly different from that in which we live, and by our knowledge and experience of which all our thoughts are in some way guided and produced, that we cannot bring it in any way before our minds. We can as easily imagine the absence of space, or of gravitation, or of virtue itself. But still, allowing that, if we would keep within the sphere of our own understandings, we *must* suppose a *degree* of evil, yet why, as I have said, is there so much?* It is not necessary, or even useful, as far as we can discern, to the very best men to have any great mass of it with which to contend. It appears to be the universal fact, that there is the most goodness in those societies in which

* See the extract from Johnson, in note, p. 95.

there is the least depravation. If we could restore the golden age, supposing such an age ever to have existed, we might be the better for it. Vice perpetuates itself, and we always find most virtue, wherever virtue is most a habit, and most rooted in the sympathies, as well as the principles, which give it its strength. If, moreover, any one were bold enough to affirm that the physical evils only to which we are subject, are enough to exercise all the moral and Christian virtues, active and passive, of every kind, I am not sure that we could dispute the truth of the affirmation. Wherefore the accounting, if for evil at all, yet for so much as there is, is, I think, impossible, and the difficulty which it creates, though to be submitted to, yet inexplicable.

Nevertheless, though thus every theory which *we* can frame of the principles on which evil, and even moral evil, becomes subservient to good, must, I think, fail to account for the whole case, it is not the less certain that even moral evil, deeply as we must always lament it, may yet, and often does, educe substantial virtue of the very highest kinds. Its ugly and venomous nature still does not preclude it from bearing that precious jewel in its head. The relief of merely physical distress does much: much both for him who bestows, and him who receives, the bounty given. But to raise the victims of ignorance, or of bad education, or of false religions, out of a state of moral tempta-

tion, in which virtue has not the succour which it needs, does more. If a man relieve poverty, he has his reward, and this may be both an enduring and a moral reward, even though he do not look directly to God in what he is doing. But if he raise a soul from sin, the good which he does thus is both a greater good in itself; and also, if his own mental processes be what they ought to be, reacts on his own mind to his own salvation. Amongst its other benefits, it produces in him, or ought to produce, a more conscious humility on account of his own weaknesses and imperfections, and a livelier thankfulness for being saved himself.

I have not, as I have said, assumed in this chapter the truth of Christianity, nor referred to its doctrines. In fact, however, the problem of the origin of evil is a problem into which Christianity gives not, and pretends not to give, any insight whatever. Recognising, as it does, and must, the actual existence of the principle, and providing the remedy for it, our religion leaves wholly untouched the metaphysics of the question how it came to exist, or why it is tolerated, only teaching us to humble ourselves before God for what we all partake of it, to strive to extirpate it through his help; and also promising us that essential help which he both can and will bestow on all who seek it as they ought. It also appears to me of importance to observe, that one of the ablest, and also

one of the most recent writers on this subject, has only exposed the nugatory and unintelligible distinctions made by his predecessors, in order to fall into at least an equal error of another sort. *His* error is that of optimism. "All will come right at the last. We shall find out, when we see all, that all is for the best."*

But if all is for the best, even sin is for the best.

* "Arguing as we do on every other subject, we have a right to impute the perception of any evil at all, to our own ignorance; and to conclude that if we knew the whole system, and could extend our comprehension to the entire plan of creation, we should no longer believe that there was any evil at all."—*Lord Brougham's note* (28) *to Paley's Natural Theology*, chap. xxvi. p. 129. And see also his *Dissertation on the Origin of Evil*, p. 74, *et seq.*

In Mr. Bailey's clever poem of Festus are the following lines:—

"Yet merit or demerit none I see
In nature, human or material,
In passions or affections, good or bad.
We only know that God's best purposes
Are *oftenest* brought about by dreadest sins.
Is thunder evil, or is dew divine?
Does virtue lie in sunshine, sin in storm?
Is not each natural, each needful, best?"—*Festus*, p. 49, quoted in Mr. Pearson's recent work on *Infidelity*, p. 257.

Very strange opinions are often held and advanced by very good men, but I cannot see *how* any moral distinctions can be reasonably apprehended by persons who sympathise with the feeling expressed in these lines.

I do not mean that the optimist will often actually use such language as this. But the argument, if so it is to be called, leads to it, and he cannot evade the conclusion.* And then from this conclusion follows the

* "If storms and earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia or a Catiline?"

The answer is easy, that we do not know that storms and earthquakes are in the least degree inconsistent with the harmony (largely interpreted) of the material universe; but we do know that such men as Borgia and Catiline break the law, and therefore run counter to the moral design of its Creator and Governor.

I copy, while I transcribe these pages, the following additional lines from the recent poem referred to in the preceding note:—

"The soul is but an organ, and it hath
No power of good and evil in itself,
More than the eye hath power of light or dark.
God fitted it for good, and evil is
Good in another way we are not skilled in."

Festus, p. 48.

Mr. Pearson, after quoting these lines, proceeds as follows:—"Dr. Strauss says, 'Human kind is impeccable, for the progress of its development is irreproachable. Pollution cleaves only to the individual. It does not reach the race and its history.'—*Leben Jesu*, last chapter. The consciousness of guilt becomes, on this system, a delusion. The sense of responsibility, which is a fact in the natural history of man, is belied. And that voice, which comes from the recesses of our moral nature, pointing us from a judge within the breast to a judge without and above, is silenced. That God is ever educing good from evil is true, and that the ministry of evil, mysterious

inference: "But if sin is for the best, I may as well be a sinner." There is not any other self-deceit into which people are ever betrayed by their profanation of the reasoning faculty, which tends more to the confusion of all moral distinctions than the being tempted to make this daring inference. I much fear also that it has often been common to make it. People will argue as follows: "There must be vice: it is of the eternal order of things; therefore out of what must be, there can be no great harm if I pick out all the pleasure I can for myself." "There must be, or perhaps it is for the good of the world that there should be, bribery and corruption: therefore I may bribe and corrupt." "Tyranny is useful, therefore I may as well be a tyrant." No man, I imagine, who has ever known mankind can have failed to see many instances in which these fallacies, or such as these, unprincipled

though it be, is made under his benign supremacy to subserve most important purposes, agrees at once with experience and Scripture. But that evil has no positive existence, that it is only good in another way, is as repugnant to our moral sentiments as it is opposed to Christianity. We will persist in calling this course of conduct bad, and that opposite course good; and can never act on the belief that both were alike things of fate and necessity, or that each agent is a structure formed by inevitable laws, and part, or particle of God. When this creed prevails, the foundations of the earth will be out of course. Only let this doctrine leaven the mass of a community, and the result will be a deluge of sensuality and crime." —*Pearson on Infidelity*, 1853, pp. 72, 73.

as they will doubtless appear to many, have yet had great real effect in weakening the resistance which the voice of conscience would otherwise oppose to vice and brutality, and in bringing men down from placing their happiness in heaven to at least the toleration of the worst blots to be found on earth.

Wherefore the only answer which can be given to this great problem of the existence of evil is, as was said before, that it is insoluble: that good is not evil, nor evil good; and that vice and virtue are always opposites. God in his mercy will, indeed, sometimes *turn* evil into good, and will extract a virtue in some men even from the vice which he permits in others. Whatever we see that HE does, it is also our duty and happiness, so far as he places it in our power, to struggle to do. But still we cannot and ought not to attempt to combine these discordant elements of a universe far too large for our comprehension, into a single whole. That a qualified happiness may exist on earth, and that the good are the happy, is a truth which we may know. That God is good, and wise, and powerful, and that we may safely commit everything which we have, and which we are, to his keeping, until the day on which he shall disperse from our sight all those clouds by which his throne is now surrounded, we know also. But it is not in our power to refract the sunbeam itself, or follow its irradiation of the whole path which we have to tread.

CHAPTER XI.

Of a Future State.

THE commonest of the arguments for a future state with which we are accustomed to meet, is, as I apprehend, that it is necessary, or to be expected, as a means of rectifying the inequalities of the present state, and especially of compensating the undeserved calamities which often befall good men. And this is, I think, a valid argument. Once establish the belief, whether by revelation or reason, of the justice, and goodness, and power, and of the paternal government of the Almighty, and then this doctrine of future rewards and future punishments does come in exactly in the way in which it is introduced in the New Testament, as the plain inference for plain minds strictly deducible from it. To speak, for example, of heaven as the actual recompense of well-doing on earth; and to urge that any light afflictions which are but for a moment are not worthy to be compared with eternal glory, are arguments incomparably the most effective,

and than which none can be more just, to sustain a faith in immortality in all who believe that God is what he is. But still they are arguments which necessarily rest either on the authority of some express revelation, or on those analogies derived from what we see of the design of creation, which are our only other inlet of knowledge concerning the invisible.*

Abstracting, therefore, for the present all reference to revelation, we have to ask the question, "In what those arguments for a future state, or for the nature of it, which we derive from earthly analogies, may be found to consist?"

In the first place, I have already observed,† that for actual extinction of being we have not, as I apprehend, any analogy whatever. Even matter, as far as we see, never perishes, although it changes its form.‡ But our present business is with mind, with the human mind in particular. And of this, I think we are entitled to say, that progress, unless intercepted either by vice, or by the decay of the material organs to which it is joined, is its natural law on earth; and that we are therefore entitled to infer analogically both its revival, and also its improvement, in that future existence in which we may suppose that it will be free from earthly embarrassments. I am quite aware of

* See before, p. 14, and note †, *ibid.* † See pp. 44, 45.

‡ Compare Butler's Analogy, chap. i., on a Future Life, and especially the passages cited before, pp. 44, 45.

the magnitude of these two exceptions which I have admitted to exist, and will consider them in their turns.

I. In the first place, then, I have allowed that the progress of mind is intercepted by vice. Indolence, cupidity, and slavery to sense, both weaken and deprave it. Of this there can be no doubt. No moralist or religionist ever has any. But then this is no presumption against that far-sighted wisdom which gives to *virtue* a progressive improvement and happy immortality. The case is also the stronger still when we ask, Who is the giver? Namely, a God who loves virtue and who hates vice; and the proof of whose goodness we base, as has been said, in his actually bestowing that same tendency and also effect, in things within our own observation and cognisance.

II. In the second place, we see also that even the good mind decays together with the failure of the bodily organs which minister to it. We have likewise to observe, that this decay usually takes place in the intellectual, though sometimes also (but that though a most painful is comparatively a rare spectacle) in the moral powers. The mind which has been occupied with the pursuit of truth, the studies of science, or the investigations of learning, will often find its progress stopped by disease, or its powers enfeebled by age, and even the ablest minds may fall into imbecility. And so, in like manner, the moral energy

will at times be less when the guiding, and preserving, and informing intellect loses its force. But then these admissions do not war on the proposition that, so long as the means of progress are both given and improved, the progress advances. The only analogy of mind which this earth can ever enable us to draw, or pretend, in arguing for the future, resides in this proposition alone; and in truth it is rather an argument in favour of a future state than against it, that the walls of the frail tenement which we inhabit decay even before we ourselves forsake them; and that the best, and purest, and most deserving of all those to whom it is assigned for a brief period, cannot keep them up. Of course, I go on the presumption that we have already proved from other sources both the infinite power, and wisdom, and also goodness of God, and that he cannot lack the means of restoring those powers, of which, though we witness the decay, we have yet to a certain extent seen the design.

I beg to add, also, that in thus complicating the decay of the moral with that of the intellectual qualities, which I have done for the purpose of bringing in its full integrity before the eye what may be called the external picture of the case which we are considering, I have not done full justice to that moral analogy on which the argument chiefly rests. These qualities we must, and do, doubtless, confess, to be really complicated, both in their growth and in their decay.

Without intellect there can be no morals. But God's end in creation, or, at any rate, that end of his with which we are here concerned, is a moral end, not an intellectual: and it is in remarkable harmony with this unquestioned truth, that though the decay of the moral, and that of the intellectual, powers of the mind certainly are, and must be, connected, yet they are by no means commensurate. The moral powers, if really moral and on the right basis, last the longest. If nursed up into growth and manliness by active working and practical habit, they still retain their impress on the character even when age has subdued the ability, or perhaps enfeebled the will, to exert them. The pulse may beat less fervently, but its healthiness has taken hold of the whole system. The setting sun retains its dignity, though it has lost its heat.

Also there are many instances in which, although we are pained to witness in old age an apparent decay of those moral and religious influences, or of that power of self-control, by which a man's earlier life has seemed to be regulated, the morality, if so to be called, has been in fact but very imperfect from the very first. A man of firm purpose, and of worldly ambition, may check resolutely, all through the more vigorous period of his life, every impulse which may appear to him to be inconsistent with the most reputable tone of society, and yet may not have made any of the better or higher motives of action or thought his active princi-

ples. Such a man may often acquire the reputation of being a good man. I do not say that he is altogether, or always, a worthless man. But when age has impaired his intellectual power of controlling himself, his exasperations of temper become visible, his selfishness manifest, his weaknesses strong. He is in distressing contrast, no doubt, to what he once was. But still it is not just to say of him that his moral power over himself is decayed; because he never had it of a truth; perhaps never had any power except that of hypocrisy.

I do not see, therefore, that the decay, which we cannot but acknowledge to come sometimes under our observation, of both the intellectual and the moral powers of the human mind, invalidates in the least that argument for a future state, which we derive from the actual progress of the human mind to its earthly maturity. That earthly maturity, as all confess, is a maturity acquired by care, by labour, by principle, by submitting ourselves to the will, or law, of a Being of surpassing power and goodness, whom we know to exist; by studying the truths which that Being has placed within human reach, by suppressing selfish desires, and by doing good to our fellow men. This is the way, as all are agreed, to man's earthly maturity, such as it is, both of virtue and of happiness. Is there then, therefore, I ask finally, in any science, or in any history, though these and everything else are still too weak to supply altogether parallel cases; or

does there exist anywhere, any analogy whatever that a progress such as this ever comes to an end?—There is not any. We do not discern anywhere, unless mind and mind alone be the exception, any law of organisation which does not always go on to complete some rational, usually some great, purpose for which it was designed. The organisation of the sidereal and planetary systems extends to immensity. The organisations of the vegetable and the animal creation cover the whole earth. The human child is nourished up by slow degrees to subdue and replenish it, and there is abundant evidence of design, and method, and contrivance, how this shall be done. Noxious animals recede before cultivation; cultivation itself is improved by art and experience. The tedious suture, by which the savage's dress of skins is made up, is superseded by the invention of the spinning-wheel, and the process of the loom. Analogous operations are going on every day in everything else, and it is one of the commonest, or I think I had rather say one of the most vulgar, of all observations that no one can tell where they will end.

It is also no less evidently of God's design, that the mind given to us by which all these purposes are accomplished, shall be educated into a manhood of its own with no less care than the body. We must *learn* what we have to do. We must take a survey of all that surrounds us; we must make laws; we must suc-

cour affliction; we must subdue temptation; we must be convinced of our dependence on the Great Being who has put all this in our power; and must acquire the sense of duty to Him; and if we be happy, or have the means of happiness granted to us, we must acquire the sense of gratitude also. And then, if there be no future state, we come to a stop, the only stop in creation, as far as we can see.*

We have, moreover, to observe, that in arguing this question, we have the full right to set before our minds what human nature, both intellectually and morally, is at its best; or to take the case of the very ablest, and most religious, and benevolent man whom we have ever happened to know, or to have heard of; of one who as a child had submitted himself affectionately and dutifully to parental guidance, who, in his youth, resisted the temptations of indolence and pleasure for the sake of fitting himself for a life of usefulness; who acted thus from the motive of duty to God, and to society, and has made it the habit of his life to sacrifice all narrow and selfish feeling at the altar of both. It is wholly impossible to believe that when such a life as this has been so spent, and thus wisely and rightly directed, and on principles which even the disbeliever in a future state must and does allow to be the right and just principles of this earthly life, our

* See Degerando du Perfectionnement Moral, vol. i. chap. x. p. 160.

whole life can forsake us at once: or that though the ear of corn, when ripened, and by a divine process, into the perfect grain, will yield its fruit, and earthly love breeds almost always earthly gratitude as its return, yet virtue and religion shall be of no avail with Him whose own goodness infuses them: or that when they are no longer visible on this earthly scene in which they have been first brought forth, they must not still be laid up securely with that Omniscient Being in whose hands are ten thousand other and better scenes in which to restore them.

Of the reasoning of this chapter only one evasion seems to me possible. Mind and virtue do not perish; but may they not be absorbed? absorbed, as has been said, into the elements; or rather, as has also been said, with less appearance of impropriety, into that divine essence from which they proceed? This was, with various modifications, the prevalent doctrine of the best heathen philosophy: it has been revived in modern Pantheism; it is at this present time the common belief of all those great masses of educated, or half-educated, Orientalists, who have not embraced either Christianity or Mahometanism;* and doubtless it

* "It has been calculated that there are in the world 252,000,000 Mahometans; 111,000,000 followers of Brahma; and 315,000,000 of Buddhists."—*Note in Macfarlane's Japan*, 1852, p. 221.

escapes, or may be made to escape, the objection of bringing the mental and moral edifice built up on earth to absolute nothing. If it is to be elevated into Deity, either after death, or according to some superstitions which I believe are not yet wholly extinct, even before the natural period of earthly dissolution seems to have arrived,* we cannot pretend to limit the use or the intent of that provision by which it has been for a time immured in this house of clay.

But though thus this theory avoids the objection of being in declared inconsistency with all those analogies of life and of progress, on which we rest our belief of the permanency of mind and of virtue, it yet is not supported by any evidence whatever. It is merely of the nature of a fable or apologue devised to account to the credulity of the imagination for existing appearances; and the great philosophers of Greece would never have rested themselves to the degree they did on so baseless a fabric, if they had added to their own skilful dialectics the inductive logic of a later age; and if they had studied the analogies of nature for the science which they afford, and as the only science by which, unless enlightened by express revelation, we can advance a single step towards the invisible. We may, however, assuredly see, if we will, that the analogy of the growth of the plant into the tree carries

* Loubere's Siam, vol. i. chap. xxii., and the Life of Tevetat, in vol. ii.

us not one single step towards the belief that the tree will grow into an animal. The growth of the human virtues to their maturity carries us not one step to the argument that man becomes God. Neither yet does the difficulty of drawing a definite line between some classes of beings interfere in the least with this conclusion. It may be impossible to state dogmatically the actual line which severs the vegetable from the animal, the brute from the man, or to say where instinct ends and reason begins. But still the *classes* remain as different as possible, and we have no analogy, or none which bears on the case before us, of any actual change of the one into the other.

The main proof, however, of the absolute futility of all this Pantheistic notion of the conversion of the perfected human mind into the mind of God, or the universe, is that it destroys at once all our notions of human individuality. Without that notion, all our conceptions of man himself are extinguished at once. We may as well suppose a revolving planet not to have any space in which to revolve, or a cycle of events which shall all be clustered in a single point. Also, in all the analogies of mental progress in particular, an individual, or perhaps a society of individuals, is always necessarily assumed as the party progressing. Every individual in any way brought forward is always brought forward by his own merit, or fortune, or effort; every society, and every class,

by the combined, or individual, merit, or fortune, or mental effort, of the individuals of whom it is composed. And if any one absolutely mental operation is more individual than another, it is that moral conscience, or consciousness, by which, if not wholly, yet most directly, we are brought near or nearer to the Divinity. Wherefore all the analogy which we have on this point is, that this same individuality shall go on also into that future state to which it conducts us, and in which, without it, we are, according to all human conception, extinct.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the objection sometimes made that religious faith is a selfish principle: or, of the disinterestedness of the moral affections.

SINCE the publication of Butler's Sermons on Human Nature, a chapter bearing this title might, it may be thought, be dispensed with in any treatise on either religion or morals. Neither yet can any person who will read those invaluable discourses with the attention which they deserve, and indeed require, need to have this question solved over again. Inasmuch, however, as the old folly is not yet wholly obsolete, of objecting both to the doctrines of religion in general, and especially to the stress which it lays on the rewards and punishments of the future life, that all true virtue is generous and disinterested, but that this doctrine appeals only to selfishness, it may not be undesirable to append here a plain statement of the whole case. It doubtless is a case which ought to be fully appreciated by all who would either love God

reasonably, or obey him. Nothing can be more certain than that no man can be made absolutely good, merely by looking to the account of what he can get by his goodness. No doing anything for the mere sake of being made happy in heaven, if viewed solely in that relation between the thing done, and the motive for doing it, nor yet any abstinence from doing anything for fear of punishment, is, or can be, a Christian virtue. If we bring a man up in only some definite line of external duty or law, which perhaps he may never transgress, and within which he keeps for fear of the penalties of transgression, or because he sees that on the whole a merely legal virtue is even to the worldly mind more profitable than vice, all such prudence as this comes into the category of a Pharisaical hypocrisy, which every true religion denounces, and never rewards.* But not the less on this account, the goodness of God, and the promise of heaven, and the fear of punishment, are helps to virtue, which we cannot afford to surrender, and which it is necessary for us to keep, both on account of the strength and clearness of that self-interest to which they appeal, and on account of the perfection of that goodness and holiness of the divine Being, which they disclose. Certainly, if there be no heaven, there can be no piety, or none worth the name. Without the sense,

* See before, p. 147.

either rational, or instinctive, or traditional, that God is good, we cannot love him. But still we do not the less love him disinterestedly. The case is like that of the child who is led by the instinct which has fastened him to his mother's breast to imbibe an early, but not on that account a less real, sympathy with both her pleasures and her pains; or like that of the mother whose longing for progeny has led her to sacrifice all her own pleasures for those of her child; or that of the father, who toils early and late for the sake of his family; or that of the soldier, who risks his own life to save his friends. These efforts and sacrifices are, in every instance, efforts and sacrifices to which the impulse of attaining some personal object has, either in the whole or in part, led the way. The child would not have first learned to love his mother as he does, but for the sake of her milk; nor the mother the child, unless she had longed for an object of her own on which to concentrate herself; and the soldier might not have been willing to risk anything to save a stranger. But not the less on this account, these same efforts and sacrifices when they come to be made, are in fact, as I have said, loving and disinterested in the very highest degree. And so also, plainly, that desire of pleasing the Almighty, which, if we did not know, or if we thought ourselves personally severed from, the operation of his goodness, we could not feel, but which, when we do feel, we feel as a disinterested

return for his goodness itself. We devote ourselves to his service with those same cords of love, which goodness, real or supposed, nourishes up naturally in all our minds for all who are connected with us by human ties; and it is also to be remarked, that the real reason why we love those most, with whom we are most closely united, is not, so far as we become amenable to rational principles, because we profit most by them, but because we know them best.

The plainest way, however, as it seems to me, in which this case can be stated, is to bring before our minds some person of ordinary acquirements, and virtues, and faculties; a man neither heroic, nor grovelling, shocked at gross vice, and, on the whole, wishing to do right, and yet not awake to splendid virtue. Such are the men to whom in all ages religion is chiefly addressed: and we may suppose a religious teacher to be in immediate contact with some such a man as this, and desirous to urge him to take the best road possible to the highest excellence within his reach. Is there any one, or at least any one who believes in a future state, who can imagine that it is not as wise and right, as it is religious, to speak to him pointedly of that state, in, perhaps, the very first place, and of its rewards and its punishments? He wishes, perhaps, to do right. Enough is left of the maxims instilled in him in his earliest childhood to have given some sort of root to that principle. But

he is exposed to seduction, and he finds it hard to resist. No one will imagine for a moment that it is less right or reasonable to strengthen his motives to virtue by the hope of heaven, and the fear of hell, than it is to warn a not ill-disposed, but thriftless, youth, that if he be extravagant, he will reduce himself to penury. Is there any zealot for generosity of principle who would not do that?

So far, however, I will allow that there is no virtue. If there be any, it is in that degree of natural goodness, if it may be so called, which first led the person of whom we are speaking, into his teacher's hands. The mere stimulant of heaven or hell, or of profit and loss, I do not suppose to have yet done him any moral good whatever, or to be anything else but a warning. But when, after receiving this warning, the man goes on to ask: "What shall I do? Who will keep me in the right path? Who will save me from temptation? Who will give me strength to advance in virtue?" the answer which points out the friend who will do this points out an object of natural love, not loved the less, but really loved for himself the more, because of the profit derived also at the same time for his friendship. That profit is, in itself, touching, and opens the mind to see and appreciate its value and its extent. But still the love itself is not for the sake of the profit, but for the sake of the real kindness and goodness from which the profit flows. And

so, also, not only in this one particular case or conjuncture, but in all the more rational states of the mind. We at least approach—even the mean mind approaches—to the loving any good man for the goodness which he shows to others, as well as for the goodness which he shows to ourselves. The goodness itself is in its nature, in all cases, the sole object of love, and it only requires a clear sight to discern it. If we be supposed to profit by a man's vices, we do not love him for these. The traitor is hated, although the treason be loved. To go back, however, from this directly moral or religious aspect of the case, to the case which I before referred to of a thriftless youth, whom we may suppose to be dilapidating an ancient inheritance. A friend of his family comes in to his aid, redeems, at his own self-sacrifice, the forfeited estate, reiterates, and with inexpressible tenderness, his remonstrances against the injury which he is doing to himself, invites him into "far other scenes, and pastures new," goes along with him, and nourishes him up into a higher range of intelligence and useful ability than he was before equal to. Now, if this poor youth can have this done for him, or is good for anything, he assuredly loves the friend who does it for that friend's own sake, would do much for him, asking for nothing again; would rejoice in all his good, and grieve at his harm, and pursue the promis-

ing course of life which he is now happily enabled to take, not less for his friend's sake than for his own.

This, it will have been observed, is a mere case of this world, and might be reduced to a case of actual money. But then the whole analogy of it goes on to God, and Christ, and religion, and is too plain to be urged further.

Also, in all cases, both religious and worldly, I believe it to be the fact, that in the degree in which we come to be influenced by the more generous and disinterested, we come also under the influence of the more effective principles of our nature. Profit and loss must be; they are of the very order of things; they do us good on the whole; they are anchors which often serve, and sometimes the only anchors which will serve, to bring us up under a very steady current the wrong way. But notwithstanding this, the mere arithmetic of a case does not, I believe, in general, act on us either so well or so forcibly as we are acted on by the affections. It is altogether astonishing, but it is no less certain, that multitudes of men, and I believe I might say both bad men and good men, will often run counter to their clearest interests, who yet will readily follow a sympathetic attachment. To be perfectly aware, and very often to confess with tears, that it is for a man's interest to be honest, pure, and good, and yet to follow evil, is one of the commonest

of all delusions.* But the same people who so delude themselves will often be very ready to follow a leader into pursuits in which they really see not that they have anything to gain. The infection of virtue, real or supposed, whether of a crusade, for example, or of a real martyrdom, will do more to govern their conduct, than any calculation, however correct. If a servant sees that his master is his real friend, he will expend a strength and effort in his master's cause, of which he will not look for compensation. If the Christian has imbibed a real love for the Redeemer, and a real gratitude for the goodness vouchsafed in all that has been done by God for man's sake, he will find that impulse not only more generous, but also more powerful, than the promise of heaven. The feeling is not only, as I have already shown, a disinterested and generous, but is also a most effective feeling.

Neither yet am I here claiming more for virtue than is fully justified by the analogy of vice. It is not calculation which commonly makes people vicious, but rather infection. A child is commonly sorry, at least, he is sorry at the first outset, to do anything wrong, to run counter to the early lessons which he has received. He is in terror, when he goes to school, of

* See Rom. vii. 14, 15, and the many passages cited from ancient heathen writers by various commentators. See, also, Xenophon's Cyropædia, lib. vi. ch. i. 41.

being led into the mischief which he is there tempted to do, not attracted by it. He had much rather be at home in the innocent nursery in which he was first brought up. He shudders at first dipping his foot into the water, although he comes at last to swim with the stream. He regrets those unreasonable points of honour, and those tyrannies of his equals, which prevent him from confiding in his best friends, and those whom he loves best. The good which he would he does not, the evil which he hates that he does.

The principle of all this, just like the impulse to active virtues, is to be sought and found in the dominating power of example over the sympathies. There is a sympathy even with an example which we dislike. We are *cowards*, and suffer more at the moment in setting ourselves in opposition to a received practice, than in going along with it.

But then, again, on the other hand, if we once get this weakness over: if the blessed example of good, and of the greatest good, be brought in efficiently to our aid, and we learn to follow that; we have then all motives, human and divine, working for us together; and are combating under a standard which we can scarcely desert.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the use and value of a traditional religion, and of the concurrence of revelation in the doctrines of natural religion already laid down.

On the evidences which have been thus brought forward of the design of creation, rests firmly and indubitably the argument for the power, and wisdom, and goodness of the Creator, and for a future state, which we derive from natural religion. In almost all ages, also, this argument has had its weight. There has not, I imagine, been any age in which it has not been or would not have been, accepted by the immense majority of mankind, as among the first and weightiest, and simplest, elements of religious belief. If men have ever been blind to it, they have been blinded by brutish ignorance: if they have ever distrusted it, this has only been, I believe, through the wilfulness or over-refinements of a false philosophy.

Nevertheless, it is to be remarked, and the remark is of importance, that though thus the argument for all

these great doctrines of religion rests on evidence wholly incontrovertible, and which, either directly or indirectly, has always had great influence, it has not ever, I suppose, owed directly to the operation of this evidence its greatest effect, or most extensive reception. Religion is reason. There may be, and, doubtless, have been, sincere inquirers into truth, who have found religion the result of their reasonings; and that result it always will be to all who institute their inquiry on just principles, and conduct it dispassionately. But in point of fact, God has dealt more graciously with us than to leave our knowledge either of his existence, or of the law under which we were born, to the use which we may make of a faculty, which, though next to our moral qualities themselves, our highest and noblest, and, with the exception of his overruling goodness, our only safeguard from error, we yet seldom allow to speak, except in a faint voice, and which is often perverted.

In God's great wisdom and goodness, therefore, even our religion is not often the actual work of even that reason which justifies it, and which is also necessary to keep it from perversion. In the vast majority of instances, our religion, and this, I apprehend, in common with all our other moral susceptibilities, is a traditional religion. Like the sense of obligation, which is impressed on the child by frown, or by ges-

ture, long before reason can be supposed to operate, or language to be understood; or like the sense of filial love, which we owe not to any reasoning on the mother's affection for us but to the smile on her face, so also comes, in fact, the sense of our duty to God, of His dominion over us, and of our dependence on Him. It may, indeed, be said, and it is sometimes said tauntingly, that this is a referring of our religion to the nurse, or the priest. And so be it. If these instruments be the only or the best vehicles by which, consistently with the rest of our moral nature, we can receive it effectually, let us receive it gratefully at their hands. Let us endeavour to deliver the nurse to whom we entrust our children from the superstitions of her creed. But let us not slacken the fervent piety with which she lifts up their hands, as well as her own, to God. Let us in after years catechise the priest himself; but let us not be the less thankful for the early lessons which he has bestowed on us of God's mercy, and providence, and truth. It is recorded of some unbeliever, a man who retained his infidelity till his death, that on the occurrence during his last illness of a casual reference to some lesson, or some observance, of the early faith which he had abandoned, he felt himself startled, and exclaimed, "O wonderful force of early impressions!" But if those impressions were for good, or if, though not made by reason, they were

yet such as reason would justify, how evidently desirable that they should have been made at that early age in which they would be stamped on the character;* and this the more evidently because reason alone, even at its best, is not often, or is only with few minds, a forcible impulse. Superstition is strong, virtue is strong, piety is strong; but reason, though it has a divine prerogative to correct and discipline the mistakes and vehemences of all those more active impulses of our frame, is weak in itself. Wherefore a traditional religion, or a religion which anticipates the conclusions which reason and the investigation of nature supply respecting the divine attributes, is of very high importance and value. The giving to man a traditional religion is also seen, I think, to be among those provisions for the mental and moral education of the whole race, which, by whatever process it may have originally germinated, or may be kept up, whether innate, intuitive, or revealed, is evidently a great fact in human history, and is either universal, or all but universal, throughout the world, and therefore not less evidently of the Creator's design. It is clearly independent of the revelation of Christianity. The Faquir and the Buddhist have it as really as the Christian; and we have no record of any state of society, barbarous or civilised, into which some religion or other

* Compare page 111.

has not been handed down. All early history has some tradition, authorised or unauthorised, of either a real or fabulous deity, or deities, and of a worship due from mankind. Neither yet, I believe, has there been ever any state of society in which this tradition has not had very powerful effect; or, if there ever has been any, it has been only among those imbruted portions of mankind which we need not take into our account. With this exception, if indeed this be real, there has not ever been any condition of human life in which some faith and some hope of the future has not been the actual product of this tradition; a faith and hope which reason, notwithstanding the real cogency of its arguments, has not always produced; and it is, moreover, among the most uncontested laws, or facts, of human existence, that a traditional religion will serve quite as well as a religion taught by reason, to nerve both the mind and the body with an endurance and power of the greatest nobleness and intensity. Or we may put this same case as follows:—"In the image of God made he man." This is tradition. Man, it has also been said, made gods in his own image for himself. That is, if there be any substratum of sense in these words, he invented gods, or thought that he discovered them, or has learned to demonstrate from obvious human analogies God's existence and operation. This is myth, or reasoning, or demonstration.

The reasonableness of the one process does not disturb the reality of the other. Both processes are useful in their several ways, and with their several limitations; and both contribute to build up that one edifice of religious truth which it is our office to rear. The traditional element of the structure has not, as it seems to me, been provided with a less wise design than the other, and is not to be under-rated in our estimate of the security, and still less in that of the devotedness, with which we adhere to it.

But if a traditional religion be thus valuable, so also, and on the same principles, must be that true and accredited revelation which gives it authority, gives it an enduring power over the mind, which fable and superstition, if they acquire, yet do not retain. Also, the value of the revelation must be still the greater, if, while it does this, we also derive from it new illustrations of the divine power, and wisdom, and goodness, and love, which are at once the greatest, and the most effective, and the most direct in their influence on the mind which ever operate on it.

I ought to state, however, before I proceed further, that in thus referring, as I do, to Christianity as a traditionary religion, I must not be understood to mean that any part of our evidence as to what Christianity is, can be said to come to us in the present

age by oral tradition. All our knowledge of both its meaning and its evidence is documentary or historical; and the only sense in which I speak of the religion as traditionary, is, that all its most influential doctrines and facts become impressed on us in childhood, and almost in infancy, by teaching or authority, and so acquire a power over our moral sympathies and kindly affections which reasoning alone will rarely impart. That we have to look to the great gift of reason and to rational criticism both to interpret its doctrines and to invigorate the claims which have thus practically their birth, or their foundation from another origin, is still true.

These, as I think, are the general principles of the case before us. It must be altogether unnecessary for me to attempt to show in detail that Christianity does actually give its own divine suffrage and confirmation to all those doctrines of natural religion; namely, those same doctrines of God's infinite wisdom, and goodness, and power, which have been already laid down in the preceding chapters.* It is also plain that the testimonies, or declarations, or precepts, so delivered or handed down, are so much tradition; and also that they correspond entirely with all those doctrines respecting both our duties and our expectations

* See particularly chap. vi.

which we may deduce from the observation of nature, or which we are taught by conscience. I may here, however, in conclusion of this subject, remark further, that the Scripture parables, and especially our blessed Lord's own, afford a signal proof or exemplification of this same truth, namely, the importance of teaching truth by tradition. The representations which are given in these parables or analogies (for parable is analogy) of the divine dealings with mankind, and in a still greater degree those which are given in the actual facts of its history, both make a more forcible impression, and are also in some respects a stronger evidence, than any merely verbal declarations which can be conceived. Thus the parable of the tares* both assumes and depictures both power and justice in the Governor of the universe, and also great goodness and personal consideration† for that mingled state of man which he superintends. It recognises, also, in the clearest terms, both the rewards and the punishments of the future life.‡ The parable of the sower sets before us all the benefits of that moral cultivation which the Divinity, of whom the sower is the shadow, bestows and exacts, and points expressly to the faults which obstruct and retard it. In the parable of the barren fig-tree§ our Saviour teaches the productive-

* Matt. xiii. 24, &c.

† *Ibid.*, 29.

‡ See, also, the following parable.

§ Mark xi. 20, 22.

ness of the faith which God will require. In his speech to Pilate,* he speaks of all power as given him from above.† He speaks of God, perpetually, as a present father; as having sons, whom he sent to work in his own vineyard; and as building a wine-press, in which he employed his husbandmen.‡ He sends a message to the husbandmen by his own Son, and shows that he expects their duty in return. He speaks of God as a King who required a marriage garment from all who were judged worthy to partake of his feast;§ as accounting of that Son as doing his will, who at first refused, but afterwards repented and went;‖ as inflicting punishment on the servant who had not learned the pity for his fellow-servant which his lord had shown to himself, and as teaching God's kindness for the single sheep which had gone astray.¶ All these pictures, or representations of God—representations of him, it is to be observed, too purely and perfectly analogical to be ever possibly misrepresented or misunderstood—are a part of the tradition, the authoritative tradition, handed down to us by the Christianity which we have received. But it is also a

* John xix. 11.
† See John xviii. 11.
‡ Matt. xxi.
§ *Ibid.*, xxii. 2, *et seq.*
‖ *Ibid.*, xx. 29.
¶ *Ibid.*, xviii. 15, and compare the 2nd and 4th verses of the same chapter with James iv. 6.

most valuable and efficacious part of the same tradition, that it comes to us through a partaker of our own humanity,—through one who was a man like as we are,—at the very same time at which he was exemplifying those actually divine perfections which constitute God's image in the human heart. He not only tells us that God is a husbandman, or a sower, or the giver of a feast—a doctrine in itself far better than any merely scholastic or philosophical statement, useful as that statement both may be and is; he not only tells us that God is infinite, and impassible, and wise, and just, and good; but he, that is Christ, has also come among us to sow his own seed, which is God's; to dress his own vine, which is God's also; and to make us all partakers of that reconciling feast in which he has himself condescended to be the offering. All this is tradition. It is a leading us by the hands of human virtue, and drawing us by the cords of human love, to set our affections on things divine. Neither yet could it be otherwise. There must be something human, or if not human in its own nature, yet in its analogies, in everything which we *love*. Wherefore to confide the teaching of our religion not to any dark sayings on a harp, but to voices which breathe themselves forth in the common intercourse of life, and which take occasions for impressing both the law of duty and the love of it from everything

which occurs on the seashore, or by the wayside, or in common conversation, is itself an instance of the consummate wisdom of God. We follow Christ the more readily, and plainly, and affectionately, because he not only was God, but was also man; and are thus both the better enabled and the more incited to make his virtues also our own.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the doctrine of Providence.

THE next consideration is, whether, in addition to that most valuable confirmation and sanction which revelation gives, or which, in the sense in which I have used the word, is given by tradition, to the doctrines of natural religion, revelation does not also bring in new doctrines of its own, to aid in the same work, the work of all religion deserving the name, namely that of building up the human character to future happiness and immortality. This it does: and these doctrines, I think, we may account to be two—first, the doctrine of Providence, although this doctrine is, no doubt, in part, not only of revealed religion, but also of the religion of nature; and, secondly, the doctrine of Christ. Paley, we know, would have included also among the doctrines which we owe to revelation the great doctrine of a future state, of which I have already spoken in chapter xi. In the heathen world, he says, this doctrine was only "one guess

among many." But he does the argument injustice, both in itself and in his notions of the extent of its reception among mankind. The analogy on which it has been shown to rest is more than a guess. It is, in truth, all but demonstration. And both tradition and history have given it a hold in all ages and countries on the common belief, which no scepticism of what have been called philosophical, but are not philosophically inductive, theories, can at all countervail. I do not reckon, therefore, the doctrine of a future state as a doctrine peculiar either to Christianity or to revelation; although, no doubt, Christianity urges it with a particular emphasis, and this especially in the crowning miracle of its whole system, the resurrection of our Saviour himself. It is, moreover, critically evident that the many reiterations of this doctrine which are given to us in the New Testament are there intended rather to bring it forward as the topic, which it is, of religious love and fear, or of practical piety, than as giving it any new foundation on which to rest. Certainly our Saviour *assumes* this doctrine as being already recognised among the Jews. He does not so properly teach that there *shall be* a realm of glory, as *what it is*, and how to attain it; and that *when* the Son of Man shall sit on his throne, he will set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left; just as if he were addressing a congregation of undoubting Christians of the present day. So, also, St. Paul,

in a sentence than which no other was ever uttered more fitted to arrest the attention of the hearers: "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee,"* and so on. The apostle here, evidently, speaks of the resurrection of the dead as nothing less than the popular belief of the persons whom he addresses. And so, also, among the heathen. There were philosophies of all sorts, and, doubtless, a very irreligious Pantheism among the rest.† But then the popular belief was still that of an Elysium and a Tartarus, in which the good should be made happy, and the wicked punished. It were idle to quote in proof of this point any special authorities. Whatever the Pyrrhonism of either the learned or the ignorant, it certainly is not possible that any such fables, whether believed or not, as that of the touching meeting of Ulysses with his mother in the Elysium of the Odyssey, or of the reunion of Sichæus and Dido in that of the Æneid, can ever have been stamped with any sort of currency or acceptance in the general mind, without impressing on many mourners of friends "not really lost, but gone before," some real hope or imagination that they "shall meet again." A thousand other illustrations of the same principle, and arguments to the same effect, must present themselves readily, but would here be superfluous.

My own notion of the whole case is, that the original

* Acts xxiii. 6.

† See pp. 23, 24, and note *, p. 24, and also pp. 150–152.

belief, without which I am fully persuaded that man was not *started* into earthly existence—though often prostrated by the extreme ignorance, or degrading profligacy, into which some portions of the race have been sunk, and in other instances perverted by different sorts of either academic or Epicurean philosophy—has been scarcely ever, if ever, extinct, and always in all not utterly degraded and corrupted natures, ready to spring up into that life and endurance which it possesses now. The dialogue between Socrates and Cephalus* furnishes of itself, as it appears to me, a sufficiently decisive proof that this is the case. "*Few, perhaps,*" says Cephalus, "*would believe me;* but be well assured, O Socrates, that when a person thinks his life near its end, a fear and anxiety come over him, to which he had before been a stranger. His mind becomes perturbed by those stories about Hades, which he had been in the habit of ridiculing, and by the apprehension lest it may be really true that people who have led ill lives will be punished. All these objects seem now to be brought closer to him, either because his mind has lost its firmness, or because he is nearer the time which must necessarily reveal the real state of the case. He becomes full, therefore, of dread and solicitude: he reckons up, and meditates upon, any injuries which he may have committed against any:

* Plato's Republic, book i.

and these, if they are numerous, are apt to disturb him, and make him start in his sleep, and fill him with anticipations of evil. He, on the other hand, whose conscience does not reproach him with the commission of any act of injustice, has a delightful hope, the nurse and comfort of old age, always present with him, that hope which is described by Pindar, as the heart-inspiriting companion of the just and the pious." I copy this translation from a note inserted p. 342, in a Familiar Introduction to the Christian Religion, published by Messrs. Rivington, in 1831, in which the whole case of both the Jewish and the Heathen belief in a future existence is, as it appears to me, very accurately stated in Letters xxx. and xxxi.

In opposition to this view of the subject, it has sometimes been observed that if the doctrine of a future state were regarded among the heathens as a recognised truth, it is very extraordinary that such a man as Cicero should not only have expressed himself concerning it with much wavering and vacillation of mind, but should even have spoken of it in one of his orations as an acknowledged fable.* Doubtless, this is very remarkable, and very painful. But nevertheless it does not follow that the great mass of his auditors

* Pro Cluentio, lxi., and compare the account given by Sallust of both Cato's and Cæsar's speeches on the Catilinarian conspiracy.

did not believe in it. All that follows is, that the Pagan doctrine had not taken that hold of the popular sympathies, which the Christian doctrine has taken among ourselves. It is no way impossible to imagine that in the first fervour of the French revolution of 1789, a vehement demagogue might have uttered a similar impiety in the streets of Paris. Some marked disapprobation would, I doubt not, have been expressed, if this had been done: but yet it might have gone down at that time; and still the belief in a future state would have remained the established and predominant belief of the mass. John Sterling, writing from Paris, in 1828, writes as follows:—"By the statement both of Roman Catholics and Protestants, the men who care for adhering to any acceptation of Christianity are not a tenth of the whole nation. But it is much more striking to hear the way in which religion is commonly talked about: and the most melancholy circumstance of all is, that the best school of French teachers . . . . are not at all inclined to do more than treat Christianity as a highly respectable form of the religious idea, without having in general a notion that it should be made a matter of personal concern to every man."* And yet, this is in a Christian country, in which the Christian doctrine is publicly *accredited* clearly enough. Then,

* Archdeacon Hare's Life of J. Sterling, p. 37. 1848.

again, there is also the actual evidence of the heathen fables themselves, for the belief to which they testify. These fables, fables as they were, took hold of the heart. That hold is, of itself, a qualified belief. The Deity invoked in the Prologue to the Rudens *must* have been held to rule the future as well as the present: and we have the distinct, and beyond all question, the true testimony of most competent witnesses, that even in the midst of heathenism no speculative refinements had, in fact, sophisticated the common mind, "that even among the barbarians no one ever fell into atheism; amongst them there are no questionings about the gods, no one questioning whether there are really such beings or not, and whether they are interested about us or not."* "How happens it," asks Tertullian, addressing the soul, "that instead of naming any one of the numerous deities who are the objects of human worship, you use the word GOD? God is great, God is good: we are under God's dispensations. This is the voice of every one. Every one, moreover, appeals to God as his judge. God sees me, I commend myself to God, and God will recompense me. What a testimony is this to the natural Christianity of the human mind! In saying this, moreover, the man lifts up his eyes, not to the capitol or to the image of Jupiter, which is there

* Ælian's Varia Historia, c. 31, quoted in Hinds's History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity, l. 35.

enthroned, but to the heaven itself. For he knows that this is the seat of the living God, to whom he owes his own being and descent."* In like manner Lactantius: "Both when they swear, and when they pray, and when they give thanks, they call by name, not on Jupiter, or the crowd of deities, but on God himself, the truth thus breaking forth from them naturally and spontaneously, in spite of all the prejudices of their education."† But there cannot have been, or *be*, all this natural reference, as it is here called, either to God or *the gods*, without a mingling up of the expectation of a future state in the same natural feeling.

The doctrine, therefore, of Providence, and the doctrine of Christ, appear to me to comprise the only accessions to the knowledge or the duties of natural religion, which we can class with propriety under the head of Revealed Religion. Christ, of course, is such

* "*Deus magnus, deus bonus*, et *quod deus dederit*, omnium vox est. Judicem quoque contestatur illum: *Deus videt*, et *Deo commendo*, et *Deus mihi reddet*. O testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ! Denique pronuntians hæc non ad Capitolium sed ad cœlum respicit. Novit enim sedem Dei vivi, ab illo et inde descendit."—*Bishop Kaye's Tertullian*, 3rd edition, pp. 165, 166, 169.

† "Nam et cum jurant, et cum optant, et cum gratias agunt, non Jovem, aut Deos multos, sed Deum nominant: adeo ipsa veritas, cogente naturâ, etiam ab invitis pectoribus erumpit."—*De Origine Erroris*, ii. 1. The whole of this remarkable chapter is well worthy attention.

an accession. Providence, if we understand by the word only that far-sighted and infinite wisdom, and skill, and contrivance by which the earth and the stars were made, and are moved, is proved at once, and for ever, by the very first proof of a God. But questions still present themselves on this most important subject to which specific answers should be given. Does, or does not, this great and benevolent Creator still superintend, and rule his creation? Does He still guide the mechanism which He has designed? or, having once launched the worlds into being, and given them* a law which they shall not break, and which shall carry them in safety to their destined end, is not his own control withdrawn, his own presence unnecessary, the impulse once given made over entirely to that series of second causes which He has ordained? We well know that this has often been imagined. And yet we should lose the best and greatest consolations and helps, and warnings also, of religion itself, if we could not account of God as always present with us, as the object of prayer, not less than of praise, as always superintending the universe which He has made, as leading us by the hand to heavenly virtue, as always about our bed, and about our path, and spying out all our ways. It is necessary, therefore, to proceed to examine what reason can do to

* See before, chap. iv.

clear a point so important, and then to show how revelation steps in, either to aid its decision, or to supply its defects.

I. In the first place, then, we may dismiss at once all consideration of the Epicurean hypothesis, that the care of the universe would be a burden to the Deity, or interfere with His tranquillity, and must, on that principle, be left either to subordinate gods, or rather to a powerful Fate which provides for itself. It is an utter contradiction thus to attempt to impose limitations on the Infinite; and it runs directly counter to all our analogies to suppose that the mind which could both gild the wing of a butterfly, and infuse into his whole moral creation the love of goodness, is not likely, if we may use such a word, more likely than not, to be present at all times, and in all His attributes of mercy, justice, and power, throughout the universe. Also, I think it is clear that the analogy of nature extends not less certainly to this point of God's perpetual presence and providence over His work, than to our proof that He is the worker of it. If to that provident wisdom, and power, and goodness, which before countless ages made all that we are, or that we see, we add a perpetual presence in everything made, we have, of absolute necessity, a perpetual and present wisdom, and care, and goodness, and providence also. We limit the illimitable if we

deny that this is the case, or if we imagine that the providence which is allowed to have been at the beginning does not last to the end, if end there be, or is not commensurate, both in duration and act, with that universe which is of its own agency. This truth is as indubitable as any proposition can possibly be.. Or, to come down from these high generalizations, certain as they are, concerning the infinite, the commoner analogies, which we are entitled to draw from our experience and observation of human life, conduct us also to the same conclusion. The father, whose power, and wisdom, and fatherly affection has laid down a course of life and happiness for his son, is desirous to inspect and guide the son's enjoyment and conduct of the life which he has prepared and instructed him to lead and to enjoy. The superior, who has a true benevolence towards his dependants, is desirous to give them, whenever he can, his personal aid in treading the path in which they should go. And if this is not actually seen to be the case, or not seen to any considerable extent, it is because the apprehension of making mistakes, or the limitations imposed on human presence, and power, and intelligence, or the sluggishness by which human efforts are often characterised, interfere with the doing what it would else be right and natural to do. But who shall interfere with the Infinite? What shall exclude Him from his constant

presence in his own work, and with the creature whom he loves? It is a contradiction in terms to suppose it possible.

The religion of nature, therefore, if thus rightly interpreted, does, I think, fairly argue that the Great Being who has created is both always present with, and always provident for, the creation which he has made. The care of the whole does not abstract the divine mind from particulars. Everything which we do, or say, or think, is as in God's presence; with His approval, as far as what we think is virtue; His disapproval, as far as it is vice, or sin. But, if this be so, it is also plain that it must be our religious duty, and a principle which must help to bring us to the best conception of our position with respect to God which it is in our power to form, to be convinced and feel that it is so: to be accustomed to consider ourselves habitually as being thus not only the creatures of God, but also as always actually in his presence and under his superintendence; to make a moral application (of course under the guidance of reason and good sense) of the events of life, and to believe that God intends us to make that application, as of occurrences which He himself controls and directs. I believe also that it might be shown, that the occurrences which naturally make the most impression on us individually are to be considered, both naturally

and providentially, as being those events of which it is both our duty and our wisdom to make a moral application more particularly. There is not anything of what can properly be called *anthropopathic* in drawing this conclusion. To make an anthropopathic estimate of God does not consist simply in deriving our notions of Him from what we know of the nature of man, for we cannot do otherwise; but in carrying on this process rashly and ignorantly. For the human is the only medium by which we can form any conception of the divine, and the conception which we are in this case taught to form, is, in the very highest degree, religious and endearing.*

All this certainly seems to me quite clear. But then, again, on the other hand, the habitudes of society, the severances which we observe to subsist between the great and the little, and the very awe with which immense power, and I may even add, celestial goodness, are encircled, tend to break through in human estimate those analogies of what may be thought too great a familiarity with so august a Being as God, and to set him up, though as a first, yet as an impassive principle, too mighty, or too severe, to be addressed or implored. The Epicurean doctrine, therefore, though founded only in an analogy of imperfec-

* See note †, p. 14.

tion, and therefore of no real weight in reference to God, has yet a hold on human weakness which tells against the truth. The Indian deity has his birth in the kindred imagination, that the indolent greatness of the Divine Being must enjoy a similar abstraction from all the hopes, and fears, and sorrows, of humanity; and very much also of the argumentative refutation of these errors is, though a just, yet not a positive, but only a negative argument; or the argument that it is not reasonable to apply to an infinite Being analogies which are derived from nothing else but the actual limitations of the imperfect powers and goodness of mankind.

For all these reasons, it appears to me that the clear and positive declarations made in Scripture of the particular and present Providence and care of the Almighty are not only a most emphatic teaching* of a doctrine of the highest religious value in itself, but also that they teach a doctrine which, though most consentaneous to nature or reason, was yet too dimly shadowed in the heathen world, not to rank most fairly among the benefits which we owe to that religion which has been revealed.

II. But then God is also Law, not less changeless than he is eternal: never altering, never slackening, never quickening, any one of his purposes. We do

* See the preceding chapter.

not see that any guidance of his creation, any power of conservation, or any means of checking its aberrations, not infused into the organisation itself, can be assumed to be requisite.* Everything that we are, or know, or feel, comes from a Being in whom there is no variableness; and though miracles have been sometimes too hastily called violations of law, it is now, I imagine, universally acknowledged that this is an incautious expression, or that it requires to be very carefully qualified, if it be allowed. The most signal miracles may have been as much provided for in the original law impressed on creation, as any deviation of an eccentric comet from the strictest ellipse. Thus, accordingly, it is observed by Butler, in a passage which has proved to be among the most eminently useful in all his clear-sighted writings, that "it would be a shortness of thought scarcely credible to imagine that no system or course of things can be *natural*, but only what we see at present," and consequently "that persons' notion of what is natural will be enlarged in proportion to their greater knowledge of the works of God, and the dispensations of his providence. Nor is there any absurdity," he adds, "in supposing that there may be beings in the universe, whose capacities, and knowledge, and views, may be

* See what was said on this subject in chapter iii., and especially page 34, and the pages which follow, and the notes, *ibid.*

so extensive, as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural, that is, analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of his creation, as natural as the visible known course of things appear to us. For there seems," he concludes, "scarce any other possible sense to be put on the word, but that only in which it is here used: similar, stated, or uniform."*

* Analogy, part i. chap. i., *ad finem*. See, also, part ii. chaps. ii. and iv. I find the following sentence in an anonymous Treatise, published at Rome in 1780, and dedicated to the Cardinal of York:—"Scriptor quidam hanc novam miraculi tradidit definitionem: *Miraculum opus est mirabile ex legibus naturæ universalibus fluens, at vel incognitis, vel ex combinatione cognitarum cum incognitis, ita ut connexio illius operis cum causâ humanam excedat intelligentiam.*"—Veritas in Lucem prolata, pars ii. sect. 5. "Definitionem hanc," it follows, "excogitavit scriptor tanquam hypothesim aptissimam ad refellendum Spinosam, qui miraculi possibilitatem negabat," &c. Who this writer here referred to is, "scriptor cæteroquin præclarus," as he is entitled in the following sentence, I have not been able to discover. It is evident that his definition agrees altogether with that of Butler.

Professor White, in a note on Miracles subjoined to his celebrated Bampton Lectures, has the following passage, which he prefaces by saying, "I beg leave to state in a few words my own ideas:"—"If the course of nature implies the whole order of events which God has ordained for the government of the world, it includes both his ordinary and extraordinary dispensations; and among them miracles may have their place, as a part of the universal plan. It is, indeed, consistent with sound philosophy, and not inconsistent with pure religion, to acknow-

Neither yet, as far as we can see, is this principle less true, or less universal, in the moral world than in

ledge that they were disposed by the Supreme Being at the same time with the more ordinary effects of his power; that their causes and occasions were arranged with the same regularity . . . On this consideration of the subject, miracles, instead of contradicting nature, form a part of it."—*White's Bampton Lectures*, 4th edition, pp. li. liii. liv. See, also, Neander's Life of Christ, book iv. sect. 87, p. 130, English Translation. We may, as it seems to me, put the whole case very intelligibly as follows:—

Suppose a sphere projected on a vast plane, and to continue its course in steady and equable motion for a long time.

Suppose this sphere to be inhabited by beings possessed of human reason, and habituated to infer from the wisdom of the contrivance, or to have inherited the persuasion, that it had been created and launched forth in its career by a Being of infinite wisdom and power, or in other words by God. But at length a difficulty is interposed. It comes to a hill. The inhabitants, or *passengers*, may perhaps fear that it will come to a dead stop, and may perhaps fear this the more, because various obstructions may have arisen or accumulated in its long course, which they have been unable wholly to overcome. But the machine puts out, just before it comes to the hill, a new, or previously-unobserved machinery, which suspends here and there the action of some of the existing wheels, and puts new wheels in their place, and so enables it to get over the obstacle. The author, or creator, or designer, had anticipated the difficulty, and had provided for the coming out of this machinery, and for its showing itself, and coming into act, at the proper time. We do not affirm of miracles that they are anything more than this: and if so, they do not interfere in the least with law or natural order. They are merely events which are *exceptional* to the usual course or law of nature or

the physical. The provisions made in nature, both for animating hope, and for relieving fear, for giving strength to those who have it, or whose consciences have living power, and are rightly informed; and on the other hand for taking it away from those who yield to temptation, are provisions, as far as we can see, not less definite or necessary in their operation, than those by which the planetary bodies are retained in their orbits, or by which the principles of mathematics or mechanics are held tight. Neither yet, in this respect, do the law of reason, and the law of revelation, differ in the least. There is exactly the same dependency of the effect on the cause, the same connection of the means put into human hands with the use made of those hands by human effort, and, as far as we see, under the same regimen of a divine Author, as in the one case, so also in the other.

III. But if, then, there is no change, if perhaps no

creation. But that these exceptions should have been provided for that one and that only case, the case of religious teaching, or the establishment of religious principles, for which they are brought forward in Scripture, is also a very remarkable and impressive feature of the case, and a feature very pregnant with consequences. The author of the Vestiges of Creation, refers in p. 159 of the tenth edition of his work to the remarkable *drop* in the series of numbers indicated by Mr. Babbage's calculating machine. A coincidence of any such drop as that with any unusual exercise of providential agency into which it might *fit*, would beyond all question be as much of a miracle as any human imagination can possible conceive.

change is possible, of that divine order, or absolute decree, by which the world was established at the beginning, is not the superintendence which we still leave to the Infinite One merely a mockery? Though we cannot affirm any control to be too extensive for him, or any object too minute to claim his care, do we not still virtually exclude him from his own work, if that work be supposed to go on exactly as it does in virtue of a law impressed at its birth?

To this question I answer, No. The putting us under a system in which a contrivance is made, and made not by blind nature, but by a personal and present, though unseen agent, for the supply of our perpetually-recurring wants or necessities, is to us precisely the same thing with the same supply of our wants by the *unseen* stepping in of the same personal agent from time to time. If an absent father provide, and by a prescribed rule, for a son who has never seen him, the changing circumstances, or altered wants of the son may make a revision of the rule necessary or desirable. The provision may be made through some friend; or let us suppose, if such a thing can be imaginable, that it may be made through some mechanical agent. I allow that it makes a great difference with regard to a son's sense of dependence on, and gratitude to, his father, whether he have seen him or not. But supposing him to see only the agent, it still makes no difference whether that agent shows him that this

revision according to circumstances (and we may particularise, if we please, the most minute circumstances imaginable) was contemplated in the original trust or commission, or whether it be referred to the father himself to alter his rule from time to time, according to circumstances. Or rather, supposing, as we of course in this case do, that the father's wisdom is perfect, it makes the tie of affection on the son's part the closer, if he be taught that the father was minutely provident for him from the very beginning, and originated a succour for his necessities before they arose.* I assume that the revision is in both cases exactly the same, and that the father is supposed to be in both of them equally cognizant of everything wanted, or doing, or done. Or, in one word, a son does not love his father the less, or think himself withdrawn from his particular care, or protection, only because he knows him to be too wise ever to give himself reason to change his designs. This statement is decisive. But it is essential not to forget, while we make it, that forbearance, and kindness, and, in an analogical sense, even a tender repentance, are among those qualities of

* "The consideration that the course of things is unalterable hath a tendency to quiet the mind under it, to beget a submission of temper to it. But when we can add that this unalterable course is appointed and continued by infinite wisdom and goodness, how absolute should be our submission, how entire our trust and dependance!"—*Butler's Sermon on the Love of God*, p. 282, second edition.

perfect wisdom in which it is our faith to believe. If the son believe this, and also that the father's eye is over him in all he does, no present or personal deference to, or affection for, an unseen father, can be greater than this.

This I apprehend to be the whole case. And from this, I think, it follows clearly, that provided we retain and familiarize in our minds a rooted belief of the infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, and perpetual presence of God in all His works, our inability to argue from the analogies of nature that His everlasting purpose ever changes, does not lessen, but on the contrary confirms, both the reality and the feeling of our being always under His most provident inspection and rule. He is not, because He is the One, and the Everlasting, less at home in all our needs, less the source of all our expected happiness, or the succour of all our sufferings. And thus far I think we may go in asserting the doctrine, not only of God, but also of Providence, without necessarily borrowing the aid of revelation; although this is still, doubtless, that doctrine of natural religion which it is the most express, and almost the peculiar, intent of revelation to expand and confirm.

IV. What then is it, we have now to ask, which revelation teaches on this doctrine particularly? How does it expand, and how confirm it? In answer to this question, I beg to recur in the first place to what

was said in the last chapter of the use and value of a traditional religion. Inasmuch as all revelation is in the large sense traditionary, it so acquires from its direct source, whether that source be remote or close at hand, a most effective weight or influence for any doctrine taught by it, or which it is supposed to teach; a much greater weight or influence, I imagine, in general, than that of unaided reason or truth. God, as we believe, and certainly I could not believe anything else, handed over some knowledge of himself, in some way or other, to our first parents at the creation.* But if so, this doctrine of Providence, in whatever way taught, and with whatever particulars, must have been the most influential feature of the whole revelation then made; must necessarily, as I apprehend, have had, especially at the first, both a more powerful and a more direct effect than any mere induction from the facts of the creation, or the analogies of nature, could at that time have had. And so also with regard to all those subsequent beliefs of which we possess any record or history. All these are eminently and undeniably influential. The present and particular agency of a Providence is a marked, or is, perhaps, the leading, feature of them all, and though often carried, especially among the ignorant, into the region of rank superstition, it is still not the

* See before, pp. 176, 177.

less clearly of the undoubted order both of nature and of God, that the human mind is so constructed as to give the doctrine a ready admission, and to make the belief of it almost a part of our nature itself.

"Expelles furca tamen usque recurret."

Whether the doctrine be true or false, so much as this would still be fact, and, therefore, under a Providential government, is Providence also. Even the errors or extravagances into which the persuasion has been perverted, are an additional presumption, or rather proof, of the utility and importance of the persuasion itself, when properly and reasonably guided or controlled. Or if, again, it be said that the notion of a Providence is innate or intuitive, its being also providential follows necessarily; and it would also follow no less that the making such a provision for us, and by the divine order, to act independently of those inferences from the analogies of nature, which are everything which our merely rational faculties can ever supply, argues the usefulness of the provision itself.

V. Thus far of, I suppose, all those popular religions, whether false or true, which have at any time taken any hold whatever of mankind. The perpetual presence, and personalisation, and providence of the Deity, though often clogged with extreme error and superstition, is recognised in them all. But the case is stronger still, if from the false religions of the

world we turn to the true. Among the Jews, besides the reiterated assertions of the doctrine of Providence, the personal superintendence and outstretched arm of their Jehovah himself, is the perpetually-recurring theme of their whole theocracy. And so also in Christianity. Miracles and signs are nothing else but the manifestations of God's presence and providence, evidences of His being much more to us than only that vivifying nature or soul of the world, which both the Oriental and the Athenian philosophers allowed him to be, and proofs that He infuses himself, not only into the universe, but specially into man, and into individual man; that he makes himself one with Christ and Christ with us.

But of Christ in particular, as showing us more expressively than we can discern anywhere else, both what the doctrine of Providence is, and also how to apply it to the religious uses of the mind, I must speak more fully in the following chapter. I will conclude for the present with repeating the observation made in the last paragraph, that the miracles involved in a religion are, beyond all question, among the most becoming or appropriate examples or illustrations of the doctrine of Providence which can be found or imagined. They are not only an evidence of truth, but they are also instances of divine thought, contrivance, and care, which come in on us most happily and persuasively in aid of all those many other proofs

of the same facts which the ordinary course of nature supplies. For though miracles be not, as has been said, to be accounted of as violations of the laws of nature, they still are exceptional to its usual progress or course. They, doubtless, had been in the prospect of the divine mind in the original or elementary constitution of the world. The Unchangeable and Eternal One does not change. But still they are out of the *common* order: they are *special* events to us, although foreseen and provided for by Him who foresees and provides for all events whatsoever. And, therefore, they are not less apt illustrations and exemplifications of the special providence of Him from whom they proceed, than any other special adaptations, which may be made to any of our visible or earthly wants or happinesses by a merely human parent, or friend.

NOTE TO CHAPTER XIV.

This is not a place in which to enter on so large a question as that of the *evidences* of miracles; but as the old objection, that the received argument attempts to prove first the doctrine by the miracle, and then the miracle by the doctrine, does not seem to be quite worn out, I wish to subjoin here a few words with regard to this particular point of the case. The case, then, is this. A fact is asserted to have taken place, of which the reality requires to be evidenced. Accordingly the evidence is produced. Now that the fact itself must be provable, or capable of proof, is plain at once. No evidence, if any were imaginable, could prove that two and two are not four, but five.

And accordingly always, and in cases of miracle exactly the same as in all other cases, the probability, or degree of probability, of the fact affirmed, is a very essential constituent of the credit which we give to the evidence for it which is brought forward. Under the ordinary laws by which the universe is governed, it is very possible, I think, to imagine that some honest man may be found, who shall affirm that he has seen the sun to rise in the west. Yet no one will believe him. We suppose him to be under some obliquity or deception of judgment or sight. But if the same man shall affirm anything, however strange, which may yet be reconcilable with what we know of the established laws of the planetary system, or of the many remarkable phenomena of the Refraction of Light, we do, or may, give him ready credit. It is the same with regard to ghost stories. There are many of these stories which do not admit of any specific refutation of the facts alleged. The specific evidence for them is often as good as that for other stories about which we entertain no doubt whatever. And yet we do not believe them. And even persons who do believe, or think that they believe them, still entertain some secret surmise that they may not be true. The obvious principle of all this is, that the extreme improbability of these assertions, that is, of the assertion that the sun has risen in the west, and of the ghost stories, outweighs, or balances, or almost balances, the evidence on which they rest. Hume's argument against miracles is, beyond all doubt, and I suppose is admitted to be, as far as this goes, a good argument. If we do not suppose dishonesty, we yet suppose some delusion of the imagination, which, however, we should not suppose, if the thing affirmed were in itself consistent and probable. This, unquestionably, is the received law of all credibility, and especially of all which depends on human testimony. It is the principle on which every judge addresses the jury, and on which every jury judges of the evidence. The judge does not invalidate good evidence, because he holds that no evidence will sustain an ab-

surdity; and a jury does not reject a truth because it disbelieves a fable. No one will say, I suppose, that this process so described is an unsound process, or can be regarded as in the first instance a proving of the thing to be proved by the evidence which is brought forward, and then a proving of the evidence by the thing to be proved. Even if it be, we have no help for it; for if we have any respect whatever for either facts or truth, we cannot do otherwise. But it is not. It is merely an exacting of the condition of credibility, which is almost always a condition of more or less, from the thing to be proved; or a making of the admission which we cannot help making, that men are sometimes, or often, impostors, and sometimes, or often, self-deluders. And this, which is a truth altogether universal in its nature, is exactly as much the case of miracles as of everything else. It is not that we first prove the doctrine by the miracle, and then the miracle by the doctrine, but that we exact from the doctrine that it be capable of proof, before we consent to put it into the scale; and that we receive it the more confidingly, if it be highly probable. We in that case distrust the less our human power of judging, or pronouncing, on matters which do not come under our common observation or daily cognizance.

What we demand, therefore, or all that we can be said to demand necessarily, with regard to the doctrine to be proved by the Scripture miracles, is, that it cannot *à priori* be affirmed to be false; that is, not inconsistent with those doctrines respecting God which we have a right to deduce from nature, or reason. All that we can demand with regard to the miracle itself is, that it be not impossible to imagine, or believe, that God may have sanctioned, or allowed, or provided for, such an interposition in the ordinary laws of his government. That is all which is necessary to admit the miracle to proof. But then also, the more illustrative of God's goodness and truth that doctrine is which is reposed on the miracle, and the more illustrative of his providence and power the miracle itself, the

more credible it is; and this because both the doctrine and the miracle are, under these conditions, brought the more in harmony with those ordinary laws of creation from which we can never depart, without having some reason to question, though not always sufficient reason to *discredit*, our own accuracy and observation.

Thus much of the want of *logic* objected to the Christian evidences in assuming the credibility or probability of a miracle as a part of its proof.

But there appear to be some persons also who will allow the truth of a miracle, and also that it may be illustrative of God's goodness and character, and yet deny that it can stamp authority on a revelation. If, however, God sets this seal on his messenger, it is wholly unreasonable to doubt the authority of the message which he brings.

Again, there are some who object that though the miracles were evidence, that is, the evidence of sense, to those who saw them performed, yet to us they come on nothing but testimony; and this is true. But then our testimony that the actual witnesses possessed an evidence which they could not, nor yet can we, reasonably disallow, is, as we contend, a sufficient testimony. Human testimony, no doubt, if we speak generally, may be entitled fallacious. But yet not all human testimony. Some is certain. It is not less certain that there was a Cæsar, or a William the Conqueror, or that there was a Christ, than that there is sand on the sea-shore, or that some men are deceivers.

CHAPTER XV.

Of Christ, both in himself and in comparison or contrast with Socrates.

MIRACLES, therefore, as indeed ought to be universally seen and acknowledged by all who believe in their reality, constitute a clear and impressive proof and example of the universal presence, and action, and providence of God. But if this be so with regard to miracles *in* general, it certainly is and must be so, eminently and particularly, with regard to the great miracle of Christ. His whole life and his death were one perpetual miracle of that perfect love which is the greatest and the most inclusive of all virtues; and we may, moreover, be said to have both him and it still in our hands, in the records left of him by his disciples. Still further, also, the doctrine of his personal divinity expresses in the clearest possible voice that *his* love and *his* providence are the present and particular love and providence of the Father also; that though prospective from the first beginning of

the creation, they are bestowed on us both by Father and Son, and in the help of their ever-watchful Spirit, as present and particular friends, and instructors, and consolers, in all our joys and sorrows, temptations and necessities; and that they both lead us, with almost the closeness of a human hand, to what we have to do, and help us to do it. Say for one moment that all this were nothing but fable, and did not claim to be anything else, yet still the thus bringing God down to us, or our capacities, though only as it were *ex machinâ*, both by miracles in general, and in his personal union with Christ, would appear to be among the happiest and most rational illustrations of the true philosophy of religion which it would be possible to devise. That philosophy cannot be perfect without supplying an adaptation to human wants and necessities; and though we should not, or rather could not, have devised any such adaptation as this for ourselves, we are not the less able to appreciate both its reasonableness and its value when thus brought before us, and brought before us not as an imagination, but as fact.

We have now, therefore, to ask in what consists more particularly that aid, or the value of that aid, which is given by Christ to all those doctrines of religion in which we are or may be instructed by nature alone. In answering this question, I think that I may, in the first place, divide mankind into two

classes—the class of those who are led by affection, or impulse, or authority; and that of those who are led, or who think that they are led, by reasoning. It is always admitted, as I suppose, that a great and valuable aid is rendered to the first of these two classes by any kindly instructor who can gain its confidence and regard, although he only reiterate the most acknowledged truths, or though he only remind us that there is a God and a futurity, and teach the most essential and undoubted rules and duties of morals. With all persons of this class, certainly (and with, perhaps, some little change of terms, I believe that I might affirm nearly the same thing of the other class), a guide, a master, or almost any leader of opinion, will always derive far more influence from his real or supposed personal character, than from the just weight of any arguments which he employs. Wherefore a man like Christ, full of every quality which takes strong hold of the human heart, could not urge even the plainest duties of natural religion on the ignorant without evident usefulness, and this especially if believed to have a divine commission.

Neither yet, in the second place, would this teaching be lost on the wise or the reasoning, or on those who thought themselves so, although, doubtless, less readily admitted by this second class than by the former. The moral sympathies act, of course, on both classes, if not on both equally. But to go here only

into the question of evidence: the evidence of an active, a disinterested, and a suffering life, when alleged in behalf of a pure doctrine, is not, cannot be, lost as evidence on any patient and honest inquirer into truth. The external miracles which our Saviour performed were among the most becoming and *natural* proofs which he could possibly give of a divine mission.* The contrast between what he was and what he taught, and what he must have been and must have taught if he had been a deceiver, is not a less strong internal proof of the same kind. And so it has been seen to be. This has been, in fact, the just and obvious estimation of these proofs which, with little exception, has been always made in every age since the time of his coming; and the few real exceptions which may be made to what I may thus state to have been the fact are very explainable. He accordingly did come, not less in correction of the sceptical spirit of the philosophers and disputers of the age in which he lived, than as affording to that humbler piety which in all ages seeks after God, if haply it may find him, the refuge which it needs. Also the revelation by Christ is evidently calculated to confirm the belief of that primary revelation to the first parents of mankind, of which all nations, and the Jewish nation especially, retain some traces in their history, and with-

* See the preceding chapter.

out which, obscure as those traces must necessarily be, the paternal character of the Almighty would be far less plainly stamped than it now is on the dispensations which he has given us.

I. The first place in every exposition both of the Christian religion itself, and of the personal history of its Author, is, I suppose, due to the great doctrine of the redemption. This is not a place in which to enter into any explication of the full meaning and character of the redemption itself. I have here, however, to observe, that it is much more to be regarded as a doctrine of fact than as a theological theory; much more intended to set before us the great mercy and wisdom of God's dealings with man, than any balancings of the perfections of justice and mercy in the divine mind. The doctrine, in brief, is that God, in his mercy, sent Christ both to live and to die for us, as we are taught in his Word; and that all who are led by him to live that life of which he is the example shall be received through him into his glory hereafter. In the fulfilling of this holy and merciful office, Christ became himself our victim, our sacrifice. Everything which the heathen or the Jew either gained, or thought that he gained, by any offerings on his altar, we gain by this voluntary offering up of Christ, if only it be carried on, as an affectionate faith will carry it on, to the fruits of love and obedience. This is all which I am here concerned to state. The doctrine cannot be

less than this, and, as it respects our own human duties and feelings, it cannot be more. But certainly it cannot be less; unless we attenuate the natural and real import both of the facts themselves and of the language in which they are related, by processes which no truly rational criticism will ever justify or allow.

II. Another of the providences, or illustrations of the providential government of the world, which may be discerned in the sending of Christ, consists, and is, I think, to be very particularly remarked, in the humility of the station in which he was born. The gospel of the poor was to be a moral gospel, including, of course, in morals all our real and essential duties to God. It was characteristically adverse to all dependence on rituals, or on costly sacrifices, and therefore the character of lowliness belonging to its Author was the most appropriate character which he could assume, and illustrative of the great truth that in every rank, not less than in every nation, God hears with like acceptance all who invoke him with like sincerity. Our Saviour's assumption of lowliness was also a particular warning against those worldly temptations into which the advantages, as they are called, of riches or station are most apt to betray. But on this I need not dwell. Among both Jews and heathens, no doubt, the lowliness or humility of Christ's worldly condition may have often served, like the scandal of the

cross, to alienate the mind from him who came into the world in that condition, and in whom, as so coming, they were the more disinclined to believe. But with the better intelligence of human nature, of morals, and of religion, which may now I suppose be presumed to subsist almost universally throughout the civilised world, no such false estimate of the case as this can retain its place. It is not beyond human, not beyond pagan, virtue even to submit to disgrace, whenever any high moral end is to be achieved by so doing. It would be a misunderstanding both of God and of man to regard it as anything of an addition to the merit or goodness of CHRIST, that he clothed himself with the poverty of our nature, and took on him the form of a servant. It would be attributing to him far too weak and erroneous a sense of this world's frivolous dignities or distinctions, to imagine that they could have a moment's weight in his holy mind. But we do not the less discern the wisdom of his choice, nor the less praise him for the condescension which he has shown.

III. Another instance of the providential wisdom shown in Christ is in the time of his coming, namely, in an age of great and widely-diffused intelligence and ability, and in which his religion was brought into immediate and close contact both with Greece and with Rome. But this part of the case has often been explained. I will here, therefore, only say on this sub-

ject, that inasmuch as these countries have handed down in fact to all the more civilised nations of the world their most received and still subsisting forms and habits both of thought and expression, no literature except theirs *could* have transmitted the sacred trust of religion so well to the rest of mankind.*

IV. Lastly, among the providences which were in Christ is to be ranked, and in nothing else, I believe, has he so much impressed and influenced the motives and actions of mankind, the unblotted perfection and loveliness of his character. With the exception, perhaps, of sordid selfishness, love influences more than anything else the human heart; and a man who not only spake as never man spake, but also lived as never man lived, was the man fitted the most appropriately, or I might say, most naturally, to draw all men after him to the imitation of those virtues which he both practised and taught. There are some who speak, and not inexcusably, of the *peculiarities* of Christ's character, and of his religion, as a ground on which we have to build up the higher estimate both of him and of it. And assuredly no other such character, no other such religion, can anywhere be found. But yet the word peculiarity is a word which I would myself, in this case, scruple to use. Christ did not come to impress any motive, or to teach any duty, of

* See note at the end of this chapter.

which the foundation was not already laid in the nature of man, and of which the susceptibilities had not been felt and acted on by good men in all countries and in all times. He came not to reveal any novel object of life, but to cleanse and bring forth the original, to restore the image of God in which man was created, and which, I believe, was seen better, and more truly, and doubtless with a simpler faith, at the very first, than after it was overgrown by the weeds of error and ignorance. He came in the course, and at the bidding, of that one Providence, who has made him the pattern to all men of the virtues which all may attain, and I therefore do not claim for him any strict peculiarity of character, except in that of his offering himself as the one great sacrifice for the sins of mankind, in which he can never be either equalled or imitated.*

But though this, with this exception, it seems to me that we may best abstain from setting up even for Christ any claim of peculiarity of moral or religious character, it is not the less, but is even the more, of the order of Providence, that we should look to his perfections, as the rule, and help, and motive, on which both to rest and raise our own. The greatest perfection for which we have to look to him must be love, without which there can be no high animation;

* See before, p. 206.

and the work in which he is occupied must be human hopes, and human fears, joys, sorrows, and anxieties, for in no other work can a moral leading be made manifest, or a religious end contemplated. That this model, moreover, is the model set by Christ, and of his love for mankind, is manifest. No other religious teacher ever kindled an attachment which has led his followers in all ages to suffer willingly for his sake. No precepts are like his, or connect the principle of duty so expressively with the performance; and no other example (and example, as we all know, is better than precept) has ever gone before us either so clearly, or so invitingly, in all the ways of goodness and truth. "What would Jesus Christ have done in this matter?" is the best question which almost any one can ever ask of himself in the moment of doubt or of temptation. It is at once one of the safest, and the most likely to be decisive; and that no act of Providence can be more useful or more benignant than the bringing such a holy and attractive example before us for our imitation, I need not repeat.

Neither shall I here enter into anything of that express and particular delineation of our Saviour's personal virtues, which it is yet useful, most useful, to familiarise. His gentleness, his tenderness, his humility, his patience, his piety, it is due to his followers to acknowledge that they have often dwelt upon, and represented, in every possible aspect in which the

human can be taught to behold the divine. There is no other perfection like his of even those natural virtues which he came to enforce: no other example by which Providence leads us so plainly by the hand to the religious ends which it has meant us to pursue.

But though the same thing has been done so often, I may still be permitted to retrace this perfect picture in reference to that one most singular example of heathen virtue, which, whenever Heathenism and Christianity are compared, forces itself always on the mind as the most comparable, if any be comparable, to that of Christ. There is no other heathenism like that of Socrates. I do not say that there have not been other heathens of equal goodness, and who will share equally in that acceptance which God vouchsafes to all of every age and country, who work righteousness; but there is not any other in whom we see what we see in him. There is not any other of whom we know so much. His inmost mind is put before us by his disciples with a truth and a particularity which may remind us of the records of the Saviour himself, and exhibits an integrity, a firmness, and a self-devotion, which we do not see that any human virtue ever surpassed. His energy in all duty, his love of truth and of justice, his resistance to popular prejudice, the evident attachment which he infused into his personal friends, and his submission to the

unjust sentence pronounced against him by his enemies, are prominent features of this great character. We may, I suppose, attribute his making that submission rather to a characteristic resoluteness of spirit in carrying out relentlessly his own principles, than to any holier or divine principle of action. But this resoluteness of his is a noble quality, nevertheless; and, especially, his refusal to make any indirect effort, although it would doubtless have succeeded, to withdraw himself from the verdict of death,—a refusal made, as much in deference to the divine law as to that of his country,—possesses a moral dignity well worthy of the admiration of all ages, and has obtained it. We have not, and cannot have any other more remarkable proof of the truth of what was before observed—that even the most characteristic of all the virtues impressed on us by our own revelation are fitted and intended by Providence to take hold, even without revelation, of the best and highest type of the human mind. He prayed not for wealth: the widow's mite was not in his eye less valuable than costly offerings. None ever treated better, as, indeed, I have before shown, than this illustrious philosopher, the argument from the design of creation.* No Christian seems ever to have entertained a more implicit reverence for the Deity, or to have been more alive to that present, and provident,

* See as before, pp. 20, 21, Mem. lib. i. chap. iv.

and particular agency of the Divine Spirit, which it is among the most express objects of revelation to teach; and he rejected altogether the Epicurean notion that because God is so great, he is above the reach of human prayer or devotion.*

Such was Socrates—so great and eminent the nobleness of his virtue, which reminds every student of Athenian literature of the divine pattern to which we are ourselves instructed to conform. But then there are contrasts also which take place in the same comparison.† The coarseness of Socrates is scarcely less

* Mem. lib. i. ch. i. sect. 19, and ch. iv. sect. 15.

† Of the controversies which have subsisted in all ages respecting the moral habits of Socrates, many readers of this treatise will of course be aware. On this subject I only need say that I believe that Le Clerc has not done him more than justice in the very able and unprejudiced Essay on his character in the third chapter of the *Sylvæ Philologicæ* subjoined to his edition of the Dialogues of Æschines Socraticus. The charge of coarseness is less definite, and may in great measure merge in that mere homeliness of manner and illustration, which was a part of his strength. Yet such passages as are to be found in Mem. lib. i. ch. ii. sect. 30; lib. ii. ch. vi. sect. 36; and lib. iv. ch. iv., sects. 22, 23, are altogether irreconcilable with that dignified purity of language, which no moral teacher can desert, without at once lowering his own mind, and lessening his hold on the minds of others. See, also, the first sentence of his answer to Crito at the conclusion of the 65th chapter of the Phædo.

To this I think it is to be added that the language which Socrates very commonly uses, in speaking of women, is language which even in the age in which he lived must have been

marked than his courage and energy. He was a man of iron. The heart of Christ was a heart of flesh. Socrates, if a Jew, would never have wept over the coming misery of Jerusalem: and though he bowed his head to the death inflicted on him, would never have vented himself in the touching exclamations: "*My Father*, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." "*Father*, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Also, both in dealing with his disciples and in dealing with the Jews, the Saviour called forth their attention on far different principles from those which Socrates loved or chose to discuss. Both were the apostles of truth. Both riveted the minds of their disciples to the doctrines which they taught. But the truth which was in Jesus was to save the lost, and cheer the humble. The truth which was in Socrates, though aided by the high energy of his character to dominate over the higher and more intellectual minds in Athens, took often the form of coolness, or irony, held up his adversaries to a pitiless ridicule, or expressed itself in a logic

justly censurable. As, for example, in his dialogue with Theodota (Mem. lib. iii. ch. xi.). I do not say that there is anything strictly immoral in this dialogue. But yet there is much which is exceedingly unrefined; and this, although both Homer and the tragedians might have taught quite as high an estimate of what the true delicacy of the female character both may and ought to be, as can be learned from the more modern appreciation of it.

which "admitted of no answer, and produced no conviction;"* and in which we do not perceive that the meek or the lowly, any more than the scribe, or the sophist, would have been disposed to follow him. Of Christ, therefore, we speak as the express image of the divine perfections, and as giving his life for mankind. Of Socrates, as the hero and the martyr of human courage and uprightness, of unflinching perseverance and disinterestedness, and of the most keen perception of truth. We may say of both, with equal propriety, although in very different, and in some respects, in opposed senses, that they brought philosophy, taking, of course, the word philosophy in its ancient sense, down from heaven, and applied it to the ordinary concerns and business of life.† But if we have nature in the one, and, perhaps, the highest nature, we have in the other, added to a sublimity of character never surpassed, a purity and an affectionateness, which in the catalogue of merely earthly virtues would often be said to be more nearly allied to weakness than strength; but which in Him appear to have been united with at once a clearer and a calmer perception than any other moral teacher ever possessed, of the cardinal truth that God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

* Plato's Euthyphro., 68–70, and the Dialogue with Critias. —*Xen. Mem.* lib. i. ch. ii. sects. 31–34.

† Cic. Tusc. Disp. v. 4.

I will now proceed to allege, out of that immense wealth of illustration which the Socratic dialogues supply, some few of those particular instances on which the proof of that distinction or contrast between Christ and Socrates, which I have here affirmed to exist, must, of course, depend.

In the first place, though Socrates was not less ready than any Christian to see and acknowledge the doctrine of a Providence, he yet, as is well known, limited all its influence to the sphere of contingent events. He thought it even ridiculous to consult the gods about such things as were of necessity.* But the true and moral interpretation of the doctrine of Providence is to see God in all things, in the certain, not less than in the contingent.†

Again, in Mem. lib. ii. ch. vi. sect. 36, Socrates speaks of a man's doing good to his friends, and harm to his enemies, as of a man who was pursuing the natural objects of an energetic life. I need not add that there are many other heathen recognitions of the same principle. Socrates was not wanting to give the reasonable and generous lesson, or teaching, that it is wise to endeavour to make friends of enemies. See the Memorabilia, lib. ii. ch. vi. sect. 35, and lib. ii. ch. iii. sect. 14. In the last of these two passages he actually exhorts

* Mem. lib. vi.

† The *ἀναγκαία*, not less than the *ἄδηλα*.

one of two brothers, who are represented as being at variance, not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good: he promises him that he will succeed in melting his brother's obduracy, if he will but be the first to show kindliness, and to concede some strictness of right: and he even recalls to his recollection that the fraternal tie was created by the Divine Power with a special view to that particular aid and necessitude which springs up naturally in so close a relation.* But still this reconciliation of brothers is a principle which comes very far short of the loving our enemies, of blessing, and doing good to, and praying for, those who injure and persecute us. The motive, also, which is urged by Socrates of conforming to the system impressed on creation is a motive far less particular and affecting than that of the desire to act as the sons of a heavenly and kind Father, who makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain both on the just and on the unjust. A mingled kindliness and prudence, or perhaps prudence alone, will make out the one lesson plainly enough. But the principle of loving because we are loved, and of forgiving because we are forgiven, although its germ must, I suppose, have always subsisted among mankind; and though Socrates, if he had had the happiness of sitting at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth,

* Mem. lib. ii. chap. iii. sects. 15–19.

might have been very prompt to catch it up from HIM, yet, needed in Athens, not less than everywhere else, a teacher sent from heaven.

Melitus and Anytus, Socrates says in his defence, cannot hurt, they can only destroy.* This, doubtless, is noble: but how much we wish that he could have added, "Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of glory." He treats his persecutors as morally wrong, but does not urge that the injustice which they are about to commit will deprive them of the approbation of God. In the dialogue with Hermogenes,† in which, if anywhere, we may suppose ourselves to have the man himself brought fully and simply before us, he assumes a tone of self-applause and self-admiration which no disciple of the Perfect One can ever feel; and in the remarkable passage in Mem. lib. iv. ch. iii., in which he rises into actual emotion in speaking of the creation, and of the providence of the gods, he still leaves us to fear that his belief in them may have been identified with that very common notion of an amalgamation with their essence, of which it is not easy to

* Plato's Apol. xciii.

† Xen. Socratis Apologia ad Judices. *Οὐκ οἶσθα, ὅτι μέχρι μὲν τοῦδε οὐδενὶ ἀνθρώπων ὑφείμην βέλτιον ἐμοῦ βεβιωκέναι; ὅπερ γὰρ ἥδιστον ἐστὶν ἥδειν, ὁσίως μοι καὶ δικαίως ἅπαντα τὸν βίον βεβιωμένον ὥστε ἰσχυρῶς ἀγάμενος ἐμαυτὸν, ταὐτὰ εὕρισκον καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὶ συγγιγνομένους γιγνώσκοντας περὶ ἐμοῦ.*

trace out the practical effect on the philosophical mind, but which is, at any rate, undoubtedly inconsistent with true simplicity of faith, and of divine worship, and especially with the Christian doctrine of the resurrection.*

* See particularly the third dialogue, sects. iv. and v. of Æschines Socraticus, a work undoubtedly very ancient if not genuine. I have been led to enter the more fully into this exposition of the character of Socrates, by its having been of late brought forward very ably and justly by Mr. Grote, but without that notice of its discrimination from our Saviour's, which the present treatise seems to me to require. I may also refer on this subject to Le Clerc's *Sylvæ Philologicæ*, to Bishop Law's Reflections on the Character of Christ, p. 331, &c., and to Jortin's Discourses, vol. ii. p. 229. I would, moreover, add that one charge which has sometimes been brought against Socrates, on the ground of his adherence to what he could not but have regarded as the superstitious worship of the popular divinities of the Athenians, cannot, I think, be fairly urged against him as a fault. His own personal worship he doubtless disembarrassed of much of the common superstition. But it is not to be inferred that, because he had pure and rational notions of a higher Providence, he therefore must have rejected altogether the intermediate divinities whom he saw worshipped around him. Even Cicero, who was more of an Academic than Socrates, did not this.[a] Modern observation on the influence of charms and incantations, and other superstitious beliefs, even on great and sincere minds,[b] affords us the same inference, or makes it really improbable that Socrates,

[a] Cic. Epist. ad Familiares, xiv. 7, referred to by Law, p. 338.

[b] Toulmin's Dissertations, p. 190.

in the circumstances in which he was placed, should have wholly cast it off. Neither yet was it to be desired for him so to do. Neither yet is it to be imagined that there was not something really superstitious in the good faith in which he held the doctrine of his Dæmon or Genius. It was something more in him than a merely graphic version of that doctrine of Providence in which he believed.

NOTE TO CHAPTER XV.

The more we reflect on what the effects have been of the derivation of Christianity to all Western Europe through Greece and Rome, the more considerable they will be seen to be. These countries, it is plain, have actually set all those forms, and habits, both of logic, and argument, and exemplification, which our education instils into us; and it is no less plain that their languages still speak, in all matters of thought, or thoughtful sentiment, their own meaning into ours. They are, in a philosophical sense, our mother tongue, and this not less, I think, to the Saxon or the Sclavonian, than in Italy or in Spain. For though our words differ, we yet have partaken, and in nearly if not quite the same degree, of the same discipline of mind. Our only fountains, as I have said, of thought, or thoughtful sentiment, are from Greece or from Rome; and that a language of thought, so formed and digested, gives out best to those who use it, the element which it conveys, need not, I suppose, be shown. Or, to give an example:—While the intellectual training of the Chinese continues to be what it now is, neither the Pauline epistles nor the Gospel narratives can be so well conveyed, or so readily comprehended in China, in a Chinese translation, as they are comprehended in Europe. The reason of this is, that Europeans have assumed as the basis of their own education very much

both of the feelings and the principles by which the writers of the Gospel history, and the first teachers of the Gospel doctrines, were themselves characterized, and which they have also impressed on Christian society. *To us*, therefore, that is, to the Western nations of Europe, it cannot be doubtful but that it is a great, or we may call it a particular, blessing of Providence that the knowledge of Christ, and the revelation through him, although a revelation intended for all nations, has travelled to us as it has. *We* understand it the better, because it took from the first those Greek and Roman forms on which we are modelled.

This, however, is not all, perhaps not the greater part, of the whole case. In the long run this wise method thus taken for the transmission of our religion will apparently also re-act, and its re-action be discernible, in the propagation of it through all the other regions of the earth. That it necessarily must be so in that great Continent which has been colonised from Europe, need not be said. All the languages of that great country are European languages; all its learning, all its opinions, and all its philosophies, are of a European origin. Again, also, if, as seems to be almost certain, not European science only, but also the civilization of Europe, is destined to win its way, though perhaps slowly, and to become established, amongst the countless populations of Asia also, the principles of European education must follow necessarily in their train. Not only Christ's name will be preached and acknowledged as that of the sovereign fated to issue from the East,[a] but also the language in which His history, and the writings of His disciples have been conveyed to ourselves; and moreover, what is of not less importance, the intelligence and full perception of the history of the first establishment of His religion in the world, of the testimonies to its truth, of its corruptions in some ages, and of its reformations in others, must come to be taught and

[a] Esse in fatis ut Judeâ profecti rerum potirentur.

learned substantially on the same principle, and in the same methods, throughout Asia, in which they will be taught and learned in the schools of Europe.[a] But if this be so, it will doubtless be a very remarkable provision of Providence, that those regions from which both the religions and the languages of Europe first emanated will owe to Europe, and to the languages which Europe has made its own, not only their admission into the Christian name, but also their attainment of the very same perception of the full and natural meaning of the religion, and the very same cautions against the perversion of it, which *we* have received. If this be an advantage, as doubtless it is, it is an advantage referable to that providential arrangement by which the revelation of Christianity was reserved to the period at which it actually took place, and at which its transmission became naturally made over to those media by which it was recorded.

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[a] "The whole world will be Japhetized."—*Bunsen's Hippolytus and his Age.*

CHAPTER XVI.

Of Christ, in continuation: or of the moral and religious lessons to be derived from his practical teaching, and from his example.

"REPENT ye."* This is our Saviour's first precept. This precept, and the particular word used to express the repentance required in the gospel,† is, as is confessed, of itself almost a characteristic of the Christian religion. So also is the perpetual reference, on every occasion on which repentance is spoken of, to the pardon and acceptance which it obtains from God. Repentance is, no doubt, a wisdom or a duty, of which no heathen moralist, when his attention had been brought home to it, can ever have doubted the obligation, or, indeed, the necessity. But still it is a doctrine nowhere else taught so earnestly, or identified so practically, with the real change both of heart and mind which is its essence, as by Christ. I may here, however, reckon in with Christ the Jewish prophets who preceded him.

* Matt. iii. 2; Mark. i. 15.

† Μετάνοια, not μεταμέλεια, although indeed these words have a correlative meaning.

Matt. iii. 17. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We are told of Socrates that he felt that he had a ministry intrusted to him by the gods for human benefit.* A noble and generous sentiment, and among the most remarkable of any which are recorded of him! But the paternal kindness of sending a well-beloved *son* enlists the affections also in aid of duty in all who listen to Him.

Christ, in entering on his high office, coupled his preaching with the healing of bodily disease.† The healing of the diseases of the body points more naturally and directly than anything else to the need of succour for those of the soul. Our Saviour says to Peter,‡ "Get thee behind me, Satan." In the whole compass of heathen philosophy I do not think that there is any observation equally expressive of the contest between the evil principle and the good principle in the human heart, § especially if we refer to the occasion on which this sentence was spoken. Take next that precious principle of pardon which is sealed to us in the parable, Matt. xviii. 21, &c., together with the impulse which it gives to human affection. ‖ Or take the relations between master and servant affirmed as in Matt. xxv. 22, 23, 30, to be the subsisting relations be-

* Apol. xxii. † Matt. iv. 23.

‡ Matt. xvi. 23. § Cf. Xen. Cyropæd. lib. vi. ch. i. sect. 41.

‖ "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?"—Matt. xviii. 33.

tween man and God.* Take that moral relationship of good men to each other, which, though it must always have been felt, yet never was expressed anywhere else so strikingly as in chapter xii. 50, of the same gospel;† or that example of invoking God in the hour of necessity, which we find set before us in xxvii. 46—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—a sentence the most consoling ever uttered to the natural fears, and pardonable weaknesses and misgivings, of our own feeble humanity.

Matt. iv. 1, *et seq.* I do not enter into the explication of the history here related, that of the temptation in the wilderness, nor into its difficulties, which doubtless are great. But thus much is plain, that our blessed Saviour, in this first dedication of himself to his life of goodness and piety, set out in it with a principle of obedience to God's will as his original principle. I do not think that we have any example in the heathen world of a life of action so founded. Both Socrates and other heathens inculcated the principle of obedience to the gods; and in speaking of the obligation of the moral duties, referred it in part to their will. But we do not see, except in Scripture,

* "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents," &c., verse 22. "Well done, good and faithful servant," &c., verse 23. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness," verse 30.

† "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

any instance of any one who, from beginning to end, appears to have given himself up to his heavenly Father's business as his business of life, and as a business to which everything else was to be subordinated. This was also the business to which Christ was dedicated, even from the beginning of his ministry. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Matt. xxv. 40. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." We have not anywhere any other appeal so touching as this to the claim made by religion on the moral sympathies of mankind; and I do not recollect that we have in the whole compass of all heathen antiquity, any declaration or statement of the closeness of the connection between true religion and these sympathies. The Pentateuch has it.† In the heathen elysium the virtues and the goodness of man to man are rewarded by the gods with happiness, and their vices punished with misery. But the moral, or philosophical, or religious connection between the virtue and its reward, and the vice and its punishment, is not traced: the virtue, as far as I recollect, is always spoken of as one thing, religion as another. In the dialogue between Socrates

* Matt. iv. 17.

† Deuteronomy xv., and see, also James i. 27.

and Cephalus,* it is brought forward as the great happiness of religion, that sacrifices are accepted as a compensation for vice: and in a long chapter in the Memorabilia† on the express subject of the benefits which the gods grant to mankind, and on the return for these benefits which mankind should make, the ministering to the use or necessities of *man* is not anywhere spoken of as a service to *God*;‡ nor is any imagination visible that our gratitude for the divine benefits *can* be testified in any other way than by the formal and expensive tributes of direct homage and supplication. The principle, "These things ought ye to have done, and not leave the others undone," does not seem to have occurred to any one of the heathen sages at any one time. Even the Stoic character was not wanting in a principle of benignity, or in referring this principle to the imitation of God.§ But then, besides that the benignity of the Stoics was too impassive, they did not make the human feeling that issue or outpouring of the religious principle which it is made by Christ.‖ We may observe on Matt. iv. 23, 24, that in this, the first record given to us of our

* The dialogue quoted before, p. 177.

† Lib. iv. chap. iii. ‡ *Ibid.*, sect. 16.

§ Antoninus, chap. xi. sects. 9–13.

‖ Perhaps this is said a little too absolutely. See Cic. pro Marcello, chap. iii.:—"Animum vincere, iracundiam cohibere, victoriam temperare, adversarium nobilitate, ingenio, virtute præstantem, non modò extollere jacentem, sed etiam amplificare

Saviour's teaching, the *inducement* by which he prevails on his hearers to listen to him, is that of relieving their greatest and most obvious sufferings. He succours the wants of the body, that he may enforce their attention to the wants of the soul.

But I proceed to the Sermon on the Mount.

Matt. v. 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The full and only meaning of these words is as follows: "That *religion* which I teach, and which comes from God, is embraced most readily by such as do not think highly of themselves, but who think of themselves humbly and soberly." An ordinary teacher of morality in Greece or Rome would have been contented to say, that for a man to think humbly and soberly of himself renders the mind serene and amiable, and so confers a happiness which mere fortune or station cannot bestow. And this is true: and the moral rule of the Greek or Roman teacher might be the same with Christ's—precisely the same. But the great worth of this lowly temper is, in Christ's estimate, the religious worth of it. I may also add, that its religious worth, or its worth in obtaining for us the kingdom of heaven, is not meant directly of its worth in obtaining the happiness of the future life, although it has that worth.

ejus pristinam dignitatem, hæc qui faciat, non ego eum cum summis viris comparo, sed simillimum Deo judico."

The worth of it here spoken of is that of its direct religion, its fitting us to become servants of God and Christ; not as it is the way by which we shall obtain the rewards which God's favour confers, although it is that way, but as it is the way which brings us to his favour itself.* So likewise in respect of the blessings promised in the verses which follow. The comfort promised to them that weep is meant of religious comfort especially; its comfort while we are in this world: and the earthly inheritance promised to the meek in verse 5, as it certainly is not to be understood of worldly wealth or power, so doubtless means chiefly the spiritual happiness to be found even in this life in that very same kingdom of Christ into which the meek and gentle spirit smooths our way. In verse 16, it is, moreover, the *religious* benefit of a good example which is brought forward as the motive for making its light to shine before men; and the same motive is assigned in verses 18 and 19, as the reason for fulfilling the law.

In verse 20, and the following verses, the lesson that the principle of law has its root in the mind, and that it is no less necessary to be watchful over the thoughts of the heart, than to keep the letter of the command, is based in like manner on its *religious* importance. It is when the gift is before the altar that the man is

* See before, chap. xii. of this treatise.

called on to reflect not only whether he have injured his brother in act, but also whether he be angry with him without a cause, or have any unkind feeling towards him. I may add that it is not to be supposed that the Scribes and Pharisees* did not in some sense know this easy truth, or would not have confessed, if asked, that the guilt of all evil or injury is in the mental impulse which prompts or persuades to it, and not in the external act itself. They did know this. Every one knows it who can think at all. The Scribes and Pharisees knew as well as we, that murders, adulteries, and covetousness,† and every species of sin and real corruption, proceed from within, or out of the heart. Their sin was not in denying this plain truth, or in setting up a system which they thought could hold good without it, but was rather in forgetting it, or in taking for granted that if they observed the law externally they were of course moral, and that if they offered sacrifices they were of course pious.‡ They would never have contradicted our Saviour by setting up the monstrous affirmation, that virtue and vice are not in the acts of the mind, but in the acts of the body, or are in the hands, and not in the heart. But

* See verse 20. † Chap. xv. 19.

‡ "On pense aisément avoir rempli les devoirs de son état, pourvu qu'on en ait observé les convenances, et l'on se croit effectivement les sentiments dont on a pris le langage."—*Vie de St. Anselme, par M. de Remusat*, p. 76.

they deluded themselves into the belief that if the hands were pure from external defilement, so must the heart be also from internal corruption, and that, if they offered the prescribed sacrifices, their minds would also at the same time, as of necessity, be drawing near to the Lord. Our Saviour, therefore, here rebukes them, not for affirming positively anything false, but because they would not see what was true, or because they were blinded by covetousness, or by some other vice: and I suppose that almost any other moral teacher might, in the same circumstances, have so far given this same moral lesson not less distinctly than he did. But still He, as a teacher of religion, gave it with peculiar emphasis and meaning to the religious teachers of his own time, and showed it the more expressively to be of high religious importance, by connecting it with the religious rites of his countrymen.

Again, in verses 29, 30, the principle of resisting temptation is strengthened by a religious appeal; the reverence for oaths, which is recognised in verse 33, is commuted into a most touching declaration that a modest simplicity of language is far more becoming than any habit of vehement asseveration to beings who are always in the presence of, and in dependence on, GOD; and in the concluding verses of the same chapter,* the eminently Christian virtue of loving our

* Verses 43–48.

enemies is urged, on the principle that we may so become the children of our Father which is in heaven, and that we ought to strive to be perfect like him.

John xiv. 23. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Observe here the close and present connection which our Saviour declares between God and himself, and all good men. Although not exempted from the exact and unchanging operation of the one eternal law of the one Creator, we are still kept under the eye and the immediate protection of our Father and Friend. I do not mean, that this is a doctrine which is peculiar to the religion taught us in Scripture. Nothing could be either more present or particular, or, indeed, more divine, than the influence commonly attributed by the heathen to the good or the evil genius, or tutelary spirits, which they supposed to be assigned to all men from their birth, and which they also very commonly regarded as emanations of the one comprehensive mind which pervaded the universe. Indeed, it was the common, although not a universal error, to conceive of these influences as too much severed from that one great mind in which they originated, and thus to convert them into almost independent divinities. But Scripture alone, and Christ especially, has taught us on authority that God dealeth with us as with sons—

sons always under his care and under his eye; and to whom, though Christ himself has now been long withdrawn from bodily sight, he still teaches all things,* and brings all things to our remembrance, through the personal agency of his Spirit.

Mark vi. 34. "And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion† toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." (See also the parallel passages.)

In pages 217, 218, I referred to a remarkable passage in the Memorabilia, in which Socrates presses, and on very high principles, a reconciliation between two brothers who were at variance, and I there observed how much this rule, very affectingly urged as it there is, falls short of the doctrine of the forgiveness of enemies taught by our Saviour. I have reserved it to this place to remark, that though I believe that Socrates himself is not recorded to have said more on this subject than is attributed to him in the place to which I refer, the principle of forgiveness appears to have been afterwards carried even in heathenism to the full extent of our Saviour's own command. "The duty we owe towards each other," say the later Stoics, "is to love all men, even our enemies. A good man will love his neighbour from his heart, will refrain

* Cf. verse 26. † ἐσπλαγχνίσθη.

from injuring, and take pleasure in protecting and serving him. He will not think himself born for himself alone, but for the common good of mankind, and will show himself kind to all according to his ability."* No benevolence, even of Christ himself, can, as I have said, be more *extensive* than this, and I do not think that its origin can be traced, in the Stoical writers from whom these precepts have been collected, to the indirect influence of Christianity itself.

But then this benevolence, pure as it is, and is represented to be, is as I have already observed briefly in page 228, a benevolence too unimpassioned to be suitable to beings made up of human affections. "No sect," says Seneca, "has more benignity than that of the Stoics, or has less severity; none is more desirous of the true good of mankind, both generally and individually. It estimates kindly all their weaknesses; it never exaggerates any of their errors; is always glad to stretch out the hand to help and sustain the afflicted. It will never wreak revenge on any enemy. It will even honour him, if he has had a good cause or a laudable motive for what he has done."† Nothing can be better than this, so far as it goes. But then even this high mind, if placed in the breast of a Stoic, never pities, and is never sad, and in

* Enfield's History of Philosophy, book ii. chap. xi. sect. 1, vol. i. p. 372. 8vo.

† De Clementiâ, chap. ii. sect. 5.

strict propriety of speech, never forgives. The perturbations of sadness and pity would interrupt both that divine tranquillity which it is his first study and first duty always to maintain, and also his power of judging and estimating truly and equitably. To forgive any offence which ought to be punished, would be nothing less than a dereliction of duty itself.

This cold aspect, however, of Stoical duty is certainly not the aspect under which, whatever the incomprehensible God may be in himself, his perfections can be most truly and intelligibly represented to man. The human affections, as well as the human virtues, of Christ, are to us a part of that example which he is to all. His burst of sorrow over Jerusalem, and his weeping for Lazarus, are, in this point of view, even more instructive than his own prayer, when offered up on the cross, for his enemies, and show a feeling for the material of which we are made, and also a sense of the true principle that man is more influenced by the heart than the head, which Zeno and Cleanthes never possessed.

No argument, as I apprehend, can prove the truth of our blessed Saviour's mission either more certainly, or more popularly, than that which is to be collected from the preceding references to his teaching and ministry. In the circumstances in which he came, and under the education which he must have received,

and in the society in which he lived, nothing less than a miraculous illumination, or an illumination which could not have been lighted up in the human breast by any not divinely and specially enlightened spirit, could possibly have formed in his mind that perfect wisdom and perfect virtue which we see him to have possessed.* I do not think that any other miracle, or that any prediction of future events, possesses that actual power over either the cultivated or the uncultivated mind, which belongs to this never-ending miracle of Christ's personal character, as we hold it in our own hands, or see it with our eyes. Most entirely also, and most remarkably, this union of Christianity with the best heathenism, in all those dictates to the enlightened conscience which both were competent to express, serves to confirm the truth and the obligation of all those dictates themselves. They are, in spirit, as far as they go together, one absolutely. There is no one fact revealed by Christianity, from which, when revealed, natural religion does not draw the same inferences, and deduce the same duties, which are drawn and deduced from it by St. John, or St. Paul, or by the Saviour himself. We are in the exact analogy of a new planet, which, as soon as it is discovered, is found to obey the same law of gravitation which governs the rest. It is a most unwise and

* See chap. xv. p. 202, and compare pp. 209, *et seq.*

unfounded jealousy which has at times led some friends of religion to account of natural religion as one thing, revealed religion as another thing. Bring in the facts—the fact of the redemption as well as the rest—and they are then no longer two things, but only one. Faith, hope, lowliness, charity, and every other virtue, are common to both. "How often," it has been asked by a very Christian poet, "has Epictetus, or Plato, or Tully preached on a text furnished by St. Paul?" "Men," it is added—

> "—— that if now alive would sit content,
> And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
> Preach it who might."*

If this be, as I believe it to be, a true observation, one inference from it, though not drawn by the author, is, that the actual religion which inspired the apostle, and that which inspired the philosopher, granting, or allowing for the diversities of its gifts, was one and the same. Accordingly, the error of those who affirm too *absolutely* that Christianity is only one *mode* of religion, although it may often amount practically to a great error, yet is not so properly to be met by affirming that religion in the large sense can be other than one, as by the warning not to undervalue the importance of the particular facts made known, and doctrines taught by Christ, and especially of the benefits con-

* Cowper's Task, book ii.

ferred by his death,* which in truth is the hinge of the whole system, and of the applications which it demands. If this were not true, it could not be true that God is accessible in every nation and in every age by all who seek him in sincerity; and there would be no meaning in the doctrine taught by the fathers, that philosophy was, though only in part, to the Gentile, what revelation is to the Christian worshipper.

But though thus all true religion is so far to be accounted of as one, there are still some further remarks which may be worth making on the great religious importance of the most eminent facts of our Saviour's history, and the highly moral and benignant features of his character.

In the first place, our Saviour's history is a very affecting history. All those facts and doctrines (and no doctrines worth attending to are ever anything else than an unfolding or interpretation of facts), which enter the mind at the gate of the feelings, rather than by the gate of the understanding only, have always, or if not always, yet certainly in the vast majority of cases, the greatest influence over it. This is one great reason why our Saviour's example has the importance which it has. There must have been many among the Jews, whom the doctrine of heaven and hell had not,

* See p. 206.

or would not have, rescued from temptation, whom yet his purity, his piety, his warmth of heart, or, I may say, his righteousness, must have carried along with him to heaven from the shores of Galilee. Consequently, the more we identify him, identify *himself*, his own life and personal history, with the lessons which he taught, the more we give him that power over ourselves also. And this is to learn of Him a lesson not less moral, not less a sublime, though at least in its perfection an unanticipated and unexpected evolution of natural morals, than it is religious.

II. It is to be remarked, in the second place, that this doctrine, which we have received of Christ's holy and most affecting life and character, is a doctrine absolutely clear of every imaginable doubt or controversy which ever has been, or can be, started respecting any theory of his religion, or any facts any way questionable, or, indeed, which have ever been questioned, of the history with which it is bound up. This doctrine, or history of Christ's character, merely takes up the gospels as we have them, as they are now in our hands. It touches on nothing which any one ever denies to be found in them, nor gives any meaning to a single text which is ever refused to it. Let us then consider how much of actual religion, the one religion of natural reason, and also of Christianity, is to be found in this doctrine, as I have called it, which cannot be, and never is, denied, namely, this doctrine

of Christ's life and of his character. It is a life and character which perpetually reminds us that our duty is always fused up with our dependence on his personal help, that is, on God's own help, in the doing of it: we see God manifesting himself, and walking before us to furnish an example of human virtue, to give us the right hand of sympathy, and urge us to follow; calling on us to be grateful, not only for the physical comforts of life and the gift of reason, but also, and especially, for those moral qualities of our nature which only are susceptible of a moral reward, and which are equally the portion of the weak and of the strong, of the learned and of the ignorant. Without entering any further into the not very easy discussion of the degree in which these great principles of all truth were faintly seen, or darkly shadowed, by the great masters of heathen wisdom, they are, doubtless, amongst the most important features of Christ's wisdom. That they, the heathens, had the rudiments, leads us to the acknowledgment of *His* perfection. His perfection sanctions the rudiments.

To Christ's life and history moreover only, or to his character, can we look for his love: and it is in his love only that he lends or can lend us the hand of help, and self-sacrifice, and encouragement; in which he tells, or can tell us, "You are weak, but I am strong: a breach is to be won, but I am with you, and lead you, and give myself for you." This is

Christ: and this, in all things, in nature, not less than in revelation, is what we most want. It is not his pay, but it is the contagion of his officer's virtue and kindness which makes the soldier fight. Not the reward of heaven, but the brotherly fellowship of the hand which guides him to it, is the most efficient motive of the Christian.

III. Another portion, also, of the importance of the Christian religion, and I will also add of its consistency both with itself, and with natural religion, is in its tenderness for the sinner. And yet its contrast with the actual religions of heathenism is greater in this point than in any other point whatsoever. The religious element of our nature is, as all must see, much too strong and too active not to have been always, even in the worst circumstances, at work in the best minds. The best parents in the worst times brought up their children not only to be just, and sober, and to speak the truth, and to offer victims on the national altars, but also to regard the gods as the punishers of crime, and to be grateful to them for good. We see, also, among the heathen philosophers that there were some who could teach to despise the body: that they could and did appeal to the motives of honour, of justice, of charity, and of true interest: and that they could and did anticipate, in a sense which could not always have been wholly vain, a union with the divine. We see also that the follies of the

ascetic, no less than the vices of the profligate, can spring up as the vain product of fable no less than as a corruption of truth. But we do not see that the heathen philosophers, any more than the divinities of popular fable, ever laid hold of the sinner with the cords of love, and tried to guide him into the path in which he should go. An intellectual friend, or a favourite pupil, they would endeavour to save from plunging into error. They would often, doubtless, have been zealous for so large a good as that of the public. But the fate of the individual outcast (though we must, of course, exclude, in saying this, any cases in which it was pressed on them by any particular tie of connection) seems to have been at all times far away from all their thoughts. And yet their own principles, if fully carried out, must have included him. They *would have* cared for him, if he had been brought home to them. But Christ *did* care for him.

IV. and lastly. I have already observed that the popular religions of heathenism always represented the heathen gods as existing in a personal relation to man. Bringing down, as they did, the gods on earth in the likeness of men, they could not be without this relation to them. But then, in the fables or superstitions which were connected with this belief, the Deity is deprived of his holiness and true majesty; and the philosophers who rejected these su-

perstitions deprived him, on the other hand, of that personal relationship to man in which reside the truest *sense* of true religion, and its most efficacious administrations to human wants. Here are the perceptions of two truths: the one truth, that of the personal relation which God bears to man; the other, that of his holiness and true majesty. We may say, making allowance for the brevity and imperfection of so general a statement, that these truths were held separately in the heathen world. Christ, and were it not that *his* doctrine is foreshadowed in Judaism, I would say that he only, has combined both these truths in one. He has shown God to us in a purity not surpassed in any contemplations of his etherial nature, and unimpassioned tranquillity, which the sage or the poet ever indulged, and at the same time as always stretching out his hand to save us from evil and direct us to good. It also appears to me that if there was to be a special revealer (and a special revealer must of necessity be by miracle) of man's personal relation to a personal God, there arises also a natural fitness in the union of God himself with the revealer.—That Christ himself was truly God, is an argument which does not belong to the present treatise. But though there are many good men, and most affectionate followers of him, by whom this doctrine is not accepted, it yet, as it seems to me, forms an absolutely essential part of that revelation of God himself, which he has

given us. It is, moreover, a doctrine which follows clearly, and necessarily, and the worship which is due to him follows also, from that doctrine of God's perpetual presence and providence of which I have been speaking both in this, and in the preceding chapters. God is everywhere: wherever he is, there he is to be worshipped: in the heaven, in the earth, in the sand which is on the sea-shore. *He, His* power and goodness: not these things themselves; but *He*, the ever-present Creator of them, is to be worshipped in them all. But more especially is he present in the human mind, and in Christ most of all; and in *Him* has so accumulated, so specially, and peculiarly, and supernaturally, all his perfections, that we are entitled to call Him, and Him alone, of all beings ever brought in any sort of contact before human sense or imagination, that very God who owns all perfections, and to worship him as such. This is the only way in which the divinity of the Saviour can be understood, and therefore in which it can be held, by any who hold that there is but one God. There can be no sense higher than this: there can be none lower.* Every

* Thus Neander:—"The word by which [God's] hidden essence reveals itself, as man reveals the secrets of his mind by speech, constitutes [as hypostatised in Christ] a universal revelation of the divine essence, in distinction from the partial individualised revelations of God in the variety of created beings."—*History of the First Planting of the Christian Church*, book vi. chap. i. sect. 9. And again, chap. iv. sect. 4:—"Ac-

theory of procession,* or of paternity, adds nothing to the intelligence of this doctrine, and, therefore, adds nothing to the doctrine itself, except so far as that the title of Son, which is given to Christ, carries with it an

cording to his [St. John's] conceptions, the Holy Spirit which illuminated and inspired former prophets partially and occasionally, dwelt in Him from the beginning, and in its totality." Thus far Neander. Whether or no he expresses in these words the exact *metaphysic* which was present to the mind of the Apostle, may, perhaps, be disputed; but at any rate they express the truth, and the whole truth. Further, also, nothing else can show or illustrate more convincingly the truth and completeness of the correspondence between the facts of religion and its theory; or between its faith and its practice, than to observe that not only it is thus our undoubting belief that God is always present, and especially always present and active with man in everything good, but also that the most perfect and comprehensive, and perhaps, also, the most easily ascertained of all rules of human duty, is to study to keep our own minds and conduct always in union with him.[a] To do this, we must, no doubt, first ascertain what God is, by clearing and enlightening our own consciences, and by referring to what he has shown us of himself in the mission of his Son. This is necessary: we cannot possibly do this duty in any other way. But then, also, this rule comprises *all* which is necessary. All other rules, whether of practice or theory, are nothing else but investigations and details as to the manner in which this principle should be carried out. The whole object of this treatise is to show and exemplify this rule as clearly as possible.

*. Or of περιχώρησις.

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[a] Compare pp. 209–211.

impression of the divine sympathy, and personal sympathy, for our human race, which is, in the highest degree, consolatory and impressive.*

* It will be objected to what has been thus said, that this resolution of what is meant by the divinity of Christ, identifies his divinity with the inspiration which exists in other good men, or with that which was bestowed on the prophets, or is a holding that though bestowed on Him in a greater measure, or without measure, it still may have been bestowed on them all in the same way. But this objection is completely answered by observing that of the *way* in which God was in the prophets, or was in Christ, or of the *way* in which he acts and is in the hearts or understandings of good men, whether Heathen or Christian, it is utterly impossible to say, or to understand anything. The *fact*, the *doctrine*, that he acts, or is, is a fact, or the teaching of a fact, which we know, and can understand, but of the *way*, or of the process, we know nothing.

The only other objection to what has been said is, that to hold that God is everywhere, and acts everywhere, is no other than Pantheism, reduces the meaning of the word God to the same meaning with that of the word nature, and detracts from his personal character or agency. But to this it is to be answered at once, that every proof of design is a proof of personality also. There cannot be any other proof than this, when the agent is invisible, and this is complete. See p. 23.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the action, or practical character of this principle of Faith, and of some of the difficulties to which its operation is liable.

THAT the two faiths, the faith of nature rightly interpreted, and the faith of revelation, unite in prescribing the same law to the human race, and combine intimately and harmoniously with each other, has been made sufficiently manifest.* Revelation, as has been said, brings in new facts; and inasmuch as we cannot fulfil all our duties to God without taking into our account all the facts of all the relations which we bear to him, and which he discloses to us, necessarily brings in so far new duties also. But otherwise the realm of nature and the realm of grace are not properly two realms, but are only one. They correspond entirely throughout their whole extent; they impose the same law; and the law of both is equally cleared and strengthened by the reaction of that same practice

* See chap. xv. head iv. pp. 209, 210, and chap. xvi.

which that one and the same law exacts and enforces,* and which does not vary, whether as taught by the heathen sage or by the Christian divine, except as Christianity has dispelled an ignorance, and revealed a love, of which heathenism had left it much to dispel and much to teach.†

Faith, therefore, and nature, or faith and reason, are one and the same.

To this conclusion I have now to add—

1st. That this faith or reason is an active principle, and naturally requires both action and the habitual reiteration of the acts which it dictates, and to which it propels, in order to acquire that moral effect and influence which it ought to have.

And then, 2ndly, That all its essential dictates and truths are truths cognizable by common understandings; and, therefore, that it is the common duty of the whole race of mankind to give them that attention which they require.

I. In the first place, then, of the activity of the principle. And on this head I have to say, that no merely indolent recognition of the existence of God, or even of a providence, does or can bring the mind of man into that truly moral state which it is meant to attain. To do this, he *must* be taught to enter into

* See chap. i., and what will be said in the concluding chapters, chaps. xix. and xx.

† See chap. xiii.

details; that is, he must enter into them to a certain extent. He cannot do it else. He is by his very nature a creature of large discourse, looking before and looking after: he must not only acknowledge that God is, but must be taught to see him in the storm, to recognise his still small voice in the tranquillity of the summer evening, and to believe in him as the actual giver of our life and our breath. He must learn to contrast the workings of God with those of man, and perceive that the same principle is at work in the designs of both, and also that its work is imperfection in the one case, perfection in the other; that the building of a palace is a triumph of human art, that the revolutions of the planets are the facile production, without effort and without difficulty, of the Master-Architect of all. Without knowing and acknowledging, or, as I have said, *seeing* all this, man is hardly man, has not and cannot have, that moral feeling or sentiment which he ought to have of the place which he occupies and is meant to occupy both in this and in the future world. But then to acknowledge and see all this he must be taught to attend and to look into it; we must make him compare the human with the divine; we must make him cognizant, so far as we can, of those visible marks of power, wisdom, and, above all, of goodness, and of the support always given to stay our feeble steps in the path of virtue, which all who will may discern.

This is faith. And this same doctrine, noble and sublime as it is in itself, furnishes, moreover, by far the most effective practical argument by which the vacillations of human will can be steadied, or vice reformed. Let us suppose that many a gentle and amiable spirit may be found, and in every condition of human existence, which may be inclined to go the right way almost of itself, and to discharge the ordinary offices of human life with kindness and charity. But what are we to do with the victims of passion, or the calculations of selfishness, or with men who have been seduced into the habits of vice, and have not force to extricate themselves? Or, if we meet with a mind of which the aspirations are for a higher good than this world can exhibit, or an intellect ready to plunge and bewilder itself in an ocean of scepticism,—faith, reason, wisdom, conviction, which are all as one, furnish the only possible arms with which to protect it. Faith in a future state is both a warning and a stimulant. Faith in God's love, and in all the manifold expressions of it made known to us both by nature and by revelation, furnishes impulses to action, which we could ill spare, and lessons of improvement of which without it we should be destitute. And that faith, also, which has learned to trace, step by step, throughout the wonders of creation, the power, wisdom, and bounty of the Almighty hand, has at the same time learned to merge all these high attributes

together in one orb of heavenly glory, and to resign all earthly doubts into the divine hand. It is also certain that the doing the actual duties which faith or religion requires is always necessary to give them that hold on the mind which they ought to have. There is always a reaction of the act on the principle from which it emanates, and which gives it birth. The primary object of the husbandman is to obtain his harvest, but the product of his labour goes far beyond the harvest which he obtains. It also nerves his arm and strengthens his habit,* gives a living power to impulses which, if not acted on, would die off, and steadies, as I have already observed, the vacillations of the will. And so, I suppose, in all other cases which can be proposed.

II. I have now to observe, secondly, that all the essential dictates and truths of this great principle of both reason and faith consist of truths which are easily cognizable by common understandings; and, therefore, that it is the common duty of all mankind to give them that attention which they require. Faith, no doubt, is one thing, sight another thing. The natural, and perhaps the universal, but certainly, in the far greater degree, the ignorant mind, is readier to comprehend what it sees, than what, because unseen, it can only believe. But this difficulty, if it be a difficulty, is only of the nature of the case. There is

* Ἕξις.

not anything more of real hardness in believing or in trusting to the goodness or greatness of God, than in trusting to the care and protection of a human friend or parent. All these qualities or attributes are in themselves alike invisible, and we see, and can see, them only in their effects. If there be any truth which is obvious, this, assuredly, is one of the most obvious imaginable, and is, moreover, proved in fact by the ready and often superstitious disposition of the vulgar to see an arbitrary or capricious exercise of the divine authority, in many instances in which men of better-informed minds discern clearly that it only acts in the strictest consonance with the laws which it has established. It may be, and is, hard to a corrupt or ignorant will to carry out the practical demands of even the soundest and simplest faith into the conduct of life. It may be hard to trace the true faith into all its connections or rightful dependencies, and also to extricate the healthful and vital seed from the many husks with which it is often incumbered. All these things are difficulties in the way of both the good and the evil; and all difficulty or uncertainty must always detract from faith, so far as it goes. But then none of these difficulties apply to it in the least, *so far as it is a principle*, or so far as it is the result of either reason or rightful authority. All that faith, moreover, which is any way essential either to the religion of reason or to the religion of Christ, does consist, and

consists solely in this necessary, and, as far as the intellect is concerned, this easy, result; not, certainly, in the right understanding of any one of those points of speculation or difficulty about which thoughtful minds can differ. Some of these points possess in their own sphere a real though subordinate importance or value. But the properest business of the true and real faith of religion is always with things about which no honest mind, whether rude or informed, has ever any real doubt, or reason for doubt,—is to make the truths which we know familiar, to impress them on our consciences, so as to be ready and willing to act on them, and so as to feel them as being the truths which they are.*

And now to bring forward finally, and in its integrity, and in the most familiar possible illustration, the whole case. I have stated it generally in my first chapter, but I may resume it here.

Let us, then, suppose, that a wise friend is stepping in to save a good but weak child from some fault to which he is tempted. "Do you not know," he asks, that is, "Do you not believe, that you will in the end suffer much more than you will gain by doing anything wrong?" The answer will be, "Yes." "Do you not know that you have a kind father, to whom

* See the passages quoted before from Seneca and Butler, note *, p. 2.

your doing what you are now tempted to do will give great pain, and that, therefore, for his sake also, you ought not to do it?" "Do you not believe that he desires your happiness, or true good, more than it is desired by any one else, and that he both can and wills to do more than any one else to promote it?"

To all these questions, and many others of the same kind, the child of whom I am speaking will always answer "Yes," as matter of course. And so far as he makes this answer sincerely and thoughtfully, he has so far faith, or rather he has the beginning of faith in his mind, a beginning on which its real value and efficacy may be, and it is to be hoped will be, in time built up. But then this his faith is as yet too young, and like everything else in the childish age, is as yet too weak, to bear our putting on it any considerable stress or dependence. Still there is not anything properly hard, or directly insincere, in the assent which he gives to the questions asked of him. He knows that the answer which he gives is the right answer. He has not any formed or substantive doubt that this is the case. He would be shocked if his making any other answer were to be supposed possible.

But though thus this child acknowledges, and thus far knows and believes, that what his friend says is the truth, he does not yet feel it, or feel it effectually. Although he has been taught that his real good will

never be promoted by the doing wrong, and would be shocked to think of saying or imagining anything else, this truth is not yet sufficiently fixed in him to govern his will. Although he does not doubt that his father loves him, he has not familiarised himself with the many actual proofs of love which his father has shown him, or been much in the habit of referring them to his father himself. He has taken them perhaps as his due, and without much thought as to the real source from which they have come, and for want of this thought he has not yet been led to love the giver as he ought in return. So far, therefore, his love both of his duty and of his father is as yet incomplete. But as far as his love is thus incomplete, so far also is his faith in the truths which produce it. Wherefore what his friend has now to do is, to prevail on him to occupy himself with these truths which, though he acknowledges, he has not been accustomed to weigh, and to reflect on these truths, and turn them over and over again in his mind. He presses on him, not anything doubtful or difficult, but the plain importance of his doing his duty, the certain happiness which arises from it, and in like manner the certain misery which follows from vice; and then again also the real greatness and purity of his father's love in the many proofs of it which he has received. When this is done, this is faith; and then if the child has but a grateful, or, I might almost say, a human spirit, no-

thing else can ever be so dear to him as to return that love so proved, and rendered so evident, and to make in all things his father's will and his own correspond. This is the faith of a child in his law of duty, and in his father's love; and this same sort of faith, when transferred to religion, is the religious virtue or duty which we understand by the name.* This faith, moreover, when thus built up and made strong, carries the whole mind to do always God's known will, just as an affectionate child, when made duly sensible of his father's kindness, will do his father's will. This is the faith which, according to the expressive proverb of the Jews, may be said to remove mountains, or to which nothing is impossible, and which is perhaps the strongest of all the impulses which we can ever feel. A faith thus founded in the requirements of God's

* "The obedience which God asks is the free obedience of a child, not a mercenary negotiation for deliverance from punishment."—*Erskine on the Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel.* This is perfectly true; but to avoid all possible misconstruction, it may be right to subjoin that we take too narrow a view of the case if we go on to say that free obedience cannot be paid without love. It *will not* be paid unless the child believes that the *father* loves, or at least rewards. But still the *child* may obey, and on principle, yet still without love. There is nothing in his obedience deserving of reward, if he obey merely in the hope of reward. But if a sense of *duty* mingle with the mercenary motive or with fear, it is still, so far as God is the object, a religious, though not a high motive, and will be, in its measure, rewarded as such.

law, and in his goodness and power, and in the many reasons for desiring to make the doing his law the first object of life, is the motive power which has in all ages led his best servants to do it; to submit to persecution, to bear affliction, to be chiefly thankful for life, inasmuch as it is his gift, and leads at last to Him. Moreover, we cannot, any of us, if we have any real strength and goodness in our own nature, see God's goodness to be what it is, and *not* thus love and obey him. It would be as easy for a child to be thoroughly penetrated with the knowledge of an affectionate parent's regard, and not love in return, as it would be to have a firm faith that God sent his Son to die for us, and yet not love God. A child possessed of that knowledge of, or that faith in, his parent's love, and yet not acted on by it, or in whom it is not effectual, either has it without attending to it, and therefore scarcely has it, or else is of a character altogether light, and unfeeling, and irrational, and incapable of the virtues which belong to his kind. Also if, from either of these two low states of existence, he may yet possibly be reclaimed, it is only by impressing him with, or fixing in him, that knowledge which he holds so loosely. And in the same manner in religion, it is only by convincing us, or impressing us with the knowledge, of God's love for us that we can be taught to love Him. We cannot either love or obey him, except so far as we know or believe, that he has first

loved us; and that knowledge is faith. Our faith therefore is, practically, in the first place to learn and know that God created and that Christ died for us; and the direct product of this faith is, to learn also what he requires of us to do in the natural paths of love and obedience to him, and of kindness to men. Surely this is not hard; that is, there certainly is not anything in it which is hard to the understanding, or as a matter of faith. There is no hardness in it to the ignorant, any more than to the learned; its only hardness is in calling off the mind from present temptations in order to fix it on the unseen or the distant. There is nothing in it in the least degree harder than it is to comprehend that we may possess the love of a father when he is out of our sight, and that we are wanting both to him and to ourselves, if we do not desire to do all his commands.*

Thus much of the innocent child, in reference to his father, a case of which the analogy includes the whole principle of faith towards God. I may still, however, in further exemplification of the same principle, turn also to the criminal, to the man bowed down with

* "Une dernière observation mérite de fixer particulièrement l'attention du sage: cette vie religieuse qui occupe pour l'humanité le sommet de l'échelle du perfectionnement, est cependant accessible à tous: elle est accessible aux plus faibles comme aux plus puissans, elle semble admettre les premiers avec une sorte de prédilection."—*Degerando du Perfectionnement Moral*, liv. i. chap. x. p. 165, *q. v.*

guilt, or brought up in ignorance, or perverted in feeling. Still, it is not hard to convince even such a man as this, if we can but gain his attention, that faith in God, and in God's goodness, is an easy doctrine for him, and is his only salvation. It may be hard to make him understand its evidences; it may be impossible to make him comprehend all its reasonableness; there will be a hardness in bringing a really new heart and new life, out of the faith which we instil into him; but he will often catch even too readily and confidently at the reprieve which is offered him from the penalty of the divine law, and the act of grace by which he is pardoned. He may imagine himself pardoned even without that transformation and real change of mind, which a rational and really religious faith requires. But then again, if we not only teach him what truth really is, but also the just estimation of it, or both to feel and see what God's love is, and the reasons for obeying him, that faith so formed is either religion itself or always creates it. If his faith in God be such a faith as this, he always *will* obey him in all things; or if he do not, it is only because he has not strength of character to do what he knows and feels to be right, because sin has taken a hold of him which he has not resolution to master, or because he will not repent.

Thus easy in its principle, thus certain in its natural effect, is the doctrine of faith; such its identity with

the practice which it demands. When the child has once thoroughly devoted himself in love to his father's will, he does, he cannot help doing, what his father requires. When the soldier is once formed into a perfect discipline, his rushing into the combat, and even on death, is already accomplished. And when the sinner has truly repented of his sin in real thankfulness for the mercies which have been vouchsafed to him, the new heart and the new life which that true faith creates and inspires, though still enfeebled by human infirmity, are yet, in their nature, nothing less than a necessity. And then, again, the *re-action* is a necessity also. The more the child actually does his father's will, the readier and the stronger is his disposition to do it—the more practised the soldier, the firmer his step; the longer our habitude in virtue, that humble virtue which never forgets either the weakness of man, or the bounty of God, or of his dispensations, or our need of his assistance, the calmer and the more resolute, and the more acceptable is the grasp which we take of that shield of faith, which he has bestowed on us both in his works and his word.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The same subject continued.

FAITH, therefore, that is, the acquisition of an intellectual faith in the design of creation, or in God's power and providence, and in the doctrine of Christ, is in itself, and abating the unnecessary difficulties often superadded to it, an easy process of mind. But it remains to be observed that the word has another meaning also besides this. It not only means, sometimes the conviction or persuasion, more or less perfect, of the reason or the understanding, but also at other times the moral confidence or decision, with which people set themselves to act on that conviction. As it is a religious or a Christian virtue, it consists much more properly and characteristically in this decision or confidence than in that conviction; but yet not exclusively: for that conviction itself, however correctly or even demonstrably reasoned out, may yet be itself in some measure the product of moral or religious qualities of the mind. If Lucretius could

have been converted by Cicero to the acknowledgment of design in the works of creation, he could scarcely have exchanged the false philosophy of his magnificent poem even for the truth, without first feeling a moral willingness to believe. But still, even when it originates in the will, it must at least hope that it enlists the understanding in its cause. It may be the persuasion of either the false or the true. We may have faith in a demonstration, or we may have faith in a history. We come to our conclusions in these two cases by different processes; but it does not follow that the one is easier, or that we place more confidence in the one than in the other. Man, in his ordinary state, is not more convinced of the correctness of any arithmetical calculation, than he is of the legitimacy of the proof given him by the marks of design in creation, of the existence of God. His faith, therefore is, or should be, as strong and as easy in the religious conclusion as in the arithmetical, and is often easier.

Why, then, it is still to be asked, has not this faith always its perfect work? Chiefly, I believe, because the attractions of earthly and sensible things take men off from the thoughts of invisible things; because they allow unreasonable doubts to creep in on their understandings, and to obscure their sensibility even to what they know. In the ordinary state of the common, but

not wholly degraded or ignorant mind, it would be altogether startled by meeting with any definite assertion that God did not make the world, or that the history of Christ is a fable. And yet the very same mind has been used to couple dimness with the distant and the future, and therefore does not make these things so present as it ought. But still there is not the least want of ease in what it has to learn and do, if it will but learn and do it. There exists also, though not with all persons, another difficulty of nearly the same kind, not in the thing to be believed, or in their faith itself, but in the evidences for it. There, doubtless, are many to whom these are no difficulty; persons who are taught their religion on an authority which they do not question, or with a sincerity and ability which has set it before them rightly and plainly. But if a man is plunged amid a generation of sophists, or in a society irritated by the corruptions of religionists against religion itself, the speculative difficulties into which he may thus be brought will be analogous, as Butler has well observed,* to external temptations,

* Analogy, p. 332. "In that numerous class of our common adversaries, who are rather *practical* than *persuaded* infidels, the honest people are never so rejoiced as when they see an ill-judged defence of Christianity. They foolishly persuade themselves that a cause which is preposterously defended must be a bad one: and putting between conscience and futurity this new reinforcement of illusion, they return with a new-

and will demand a care, a candour, and an honesty, which germinate hardly, and are blighted easily, under the unfavourable circumstances in which he is placed. But on this point I need only refer to the sixth chapter of the second part of Butler's inestimable work on Analogy. Or I might refer to a volume of controversy between some learned Mahometans and an English missionary, which cannot be read without acknowledging the real difficulties which encompass a candid Mahometan, even when a true Christianity claims his acceptance.*

The last class of the difficulties of faith of which I shall here speak is, that of the doctrinal errors, which, like a dead corpse fastened to the living body, have been too often connected with it. If false miracles are superadded to the true—if the speculations of a presumptuous metaphysics are substituted for those plain doctrines of duty to God and man which both reason and revelation unite to inculcate, or if human authority be promoted into that high place of reason, remonstrance, and love, which every teacher who desires to do real good takes most wisely in addressing his fellow-creatures; if these things be done, or these

flushed confidence to enjoy as many moments of pleasure as they can, before the bubble of existence breaks."—*Maclaine's Letters to Soame Jenyns*, pp. 5, 6.

* Controversial Tracts on Christianity and Mohammedanism, by the late Rev. Henry Martyn, published by Professor Lee, of Cambridge.

errors committed, all these errors surround that religion which they profess to be, with a hard casing, which, however, is not its own. I do not say that this is actually or directly felt to be the case in all instances. I believe that there are some minds which are much more prone to believe in the impossible than in anything else. But still all these errors do in fact, and on the whole, cumber that truth which they profess to be with great difficulties. We know that some of them operated to sever the philosophies of Greece and Rome from the popular religions. That severance had necessarily the effect of weakening the life of religion itself, or of abating its power. The same errors have also often infected Christianity, and proved great difficulties in its way, and perhaps the greater, because, although human nature is in itself always the same, yet the circumstances of the modern world have sometimes seemed to excite in the irreligious mind an actual animosity against religion itself, of which we have not, that I recollect, any example in heathen antiquity. Moreover, even in those many cases in which these difficulties, though not solved, are yet suppressed, by goodness and piety, by the disposition to submit to credited authority, and to believe anything rather than not accept what seems to be of God, the mind still dwindles for want of the solution which its nature asks and requires, the conscience suffers, and that service which ought to be, and

we hope often is, the ready though humble offering of the life and will of a free-worshipper, is converted into the wretched homage of a slave.

These, and such as these, constitute, doubtless, real difficulties with which religious faith, involved as it is in human error and weakness, must often necessarily have to contend. And to these is to be added the error of plunging into the inscrutable, or of accounting it an object of faith to ascertain *why* the divine dispensations towards us are such as they are, or "what would have followed, if God had not done as he has done."* All such inquiries into the infinite and the unsearchable are altogether baffled by our own human infirmity. In what God has done, and we know him to have done, we can discern consummate wisdom and benevolence, and trace relations of the closest intimacy with each other. We infer from nature, from tradition, from the analogy of the universe, from reason, and also from revelation, that pure, and serene, and impassible, as we must reverently acknowledge him to be in himself, yet the truest notion which *we* can form of him is of a being who rejoices in our good, and grieves in our calamity, who loves virtue, and who hates vice. There is no difficulty here. There is no difficulty in assigning to Him, and though with a humble sense of their inadequacy, yet with a certainty of their truth, those attributes of perfection which we

* Butler.

collect from his works, nor yet in believing that the moral discipline which he has begun in us on earth is meant to advance us to heaven. Neither yet is there any difficulty in believing that He, of whom the most undoubting conception which we can possibly form, and which the reasonable mind can hardly help forming, is the conception of essential power, wisdom, and goodness, and that he is present in all things, should have united himself specially and miraculously with the most signal and perfect example of human virtue which has been ever known or imagined. That virtue lived, as all have always acknowledged, a perfect life. The ancient world was scandalised for a time, because it died also a perfect death. But its highest dignity must else have been wanting. Death in a great and good cause is the crown and glory of human love and perseverance; and assuredly no other earthly, or perhaps heavenly cause, can be either so great or so good as that of man himself, and of his redemption.*

* See p. 206, and Origen against Celsus, p. 25, Spencer's Edition, and Clemens Romanus, sect. 55. See, also, Barrow's Sermons, Sermon xxvi. sect. 12, and Secker's Sermons, vol. vii. p. 96.

CHAPTER XIX.

Further observations on the practical difficulties which obstruct the operation of this principle, and on the way to remove them; and that this way is most directly to be found in the careful and active discharge of our direct duties to God, or in the practice of prayer or devotion. Also of the reaction of this practice on its principle.

I THINK that it has been shown sufficiently in the preceding chapters that Faith and Practice, when in their perfection, are not two things, but one; that is, are one, so far as heart, and will, and conviction, which are the whole mind of every voluntary agent, can possibly make them one.* I hope that I shall be forgiven, after having said all this before, both in Chapter I. and Chapter XVII., the thus repeating the same thing over again; but it is the very principle of my whole treatise, and I cannot help the reiterating of it.† Faith in God and Christ, if pure and perfectly

* On the maxim that practical habit is not less a necessity of our moral nature than μάθησις or ἐπιστήμη.—See *Xen. Mem.* lib. i. chap. ii. sect. 19.

† See ch. i. p. 2, and ch. xvii. pp. 257, 261.

undivided, carries the faithful to the work of faith, be it martyrdom or anything else, with a conviction not less absolute than that which leads the mathematician to infer a necessary conclusion from granted premisses. Faith in ambition may lead the ambitious to surrender their whole souls in the like manner to the dreams of greatness: faith in the objects of sense to sensual pleasures. And the reason why faith in God is, as it is, the strongest faith of the whole is that, however resolute men's actual or practical pursuit of worldly objects, a lurking suspicion of their comparative worthlessness always lies hid in the minds of their worshippers, a suspicion of which the worshippers of God and Christ are in no danger, and which they do not feel.

This is the theory; this is perfection; and is also the truth; and when a man has got this true and perfect theory rooted in his mind, and formed into his character, he has nothing more to ask except what God wills him to do, and then he does it. But still again, in the ordinary course of fact, this theory does not work itself out; theory is not practice, or at least is rarely carried into a practice which can be accounted of as possessing any high degree of perfection. And this, moreover, is much more the case because the life and energy of the actuating principle is not brought into full and reasonable operation, than from want of discernment as to the way in which it

should operate. Mistakes as to what the moral principle should lead us to do, though often painful, are of comparatively small consequence, if it have but led us to do our best.

I shall now proceed to state the means or remedies which are prescribed alike by reason and religion for the correction of these mistakes, and to strengthen or restore the rightful power of this same principle of faith over the mind. But I must first add to the list of the difficulties with which it has to deal, the great difficulty too often interposed by a narrow and bigoted education. I am not sure that the law prescribed by the spirit of bigotry or persecution is not, even when this is an honest spirit, yet still in its operation a worse, or more really depraving, law, than the law dictated by the study or pursuit of sensual pleasure. If, for example, a man be taught to believe that God regards forms and opinions rather than the moral obedience of life, such a vicious faith as this may do him even more harm than the perverse immorality of a life led in direct opposition to a truly holy rule, of which, even while he refuses to follow it, he yet confesses the rightfulness.

Again, another, and a not less important reason why faith has not always, nor often, its perfect work, is, that the necessary dealing with worldly things, and in the pursuit of worldly objects, and in a society mingled up with both good and evil, naturally introduces

a sort of compromise between men's faith in the unseen, and their desire of the visible, which dispossesses their minds of power and singleness. Also, man's natural and reasonable attraction to his brother man, the infection of sharing in the same pursuits, the same dreams, perhaps, or the same imaginations, the same joys, and even the same sorrows, although without the susceptibility of this attraction we can scarcely be human, or even alive to many of the first duties of religion itself, yet tends to divert from the steady prosecution of its great principle. It cannot be otherwise. The tendency may be conquered; may be made the instrument of faith itself, and a check on its errors. If we think that it is the office of a true faith to take us out of the condition in which we are born, we only deceive ourselves. The pleasures, the ambitions, the sympathies, the studies, the amusements, no less than the more solemn duties of humanity, are the field in which it is our province to contend for the prize proposed to us; and which it is our duty to sanctify, not by hedging out any portion of the circle to which it extends, but by restraining the irregular growth of any of its products. If we attempt to extinguish its wholesome growths, we shall introduce weeds. But then, again, here, where there must be liberty, there is fear of licence. The temptations of the worldly element, strong in numbers, and often in authority, give it a primary influence over the heart:

and that faith in God, under which it might have ranked, and in some golden, or imaginary state of society, might possibly be seen to rank, as a useful and religious portion of the social edifice, practically loses its just prerogative. It still remains a concurrent power in the mind; but then all powers which are only concurrent are weak. If we could imagine some island—"Some happier island in the watery waste"—into which none but men of the purest minds could find admittance, or some crusade in which every soldier should be sincere, it would be more impossible for a true faith to resist the infectious principle of that perfect society, than it is hard to stem the career of vice. But then, again, on the other hand, all vice, and what is, perhaps, still more, all weakness, wars on a principle which rests on any such imaginary virtue as is here supposed. And there is but too much of this vice and weakness in the world in which we live, a world of which the virtue or the faith is but as a single strand of pure thread twined into a rope with baser materials.

The question for us is, therefore, how, in this world in which we do live, we may best hope to acquire or to regain that strength for the principle of faith which it ought to have, or how identify with it the practice, without which it cannot truly exist; but from which

superstition, and worldliness, and weakness, and the temptations of sensual pleasure, tend to seduce.

The first and most direct rule in all these different cases is, beyond all doubt, to bring fully, and I might almost say, familiarly, before the mind, what our faith is, in itself. Faith, that is the faith of the understanding in all essential truth, is in itself singly considered, an easy and a simple thing, I had almost said an obvious thing, certainly natural. But then to make it practical, it requires, as I have already said over and over again, to be reiterated line on line, so as to give it volume or form, or to make it subtend the larger angle in the mind's eye. We must not content ourselves with the mere verbal admission that God is wise and great, and good; but we must have our minds penetrated by the evidences, and the details of the evidences, of the wisdom, greatness, and goodness, which his creation displays. All minds are sufficiently equal to this task, and all these evidences are also sufficiently discernible in every portion of his whole work: for there is not any portion of that work so minute, or so obscure, that we may not say of it that God's finger is here. Nor is there any observer so unskilled that he may not, or must not, make the remark. And then, especially if taught that neither God's power nor God's goodness cease with mortality, but are always infinite, and after death may, we believe and hope, be

unclouded, he has both every reason and every motive which can possibly operate on any at once feeling and intellectual nature to raise him above the slavery of sense, and to make him live by faith. He will then be a worshipper of God, not in form only, but also in spirit and truth. His faith will save him, even in the attractive pursuit of the proper, and permissible, and useful objects of this world, from transferring to them that primary dominion over his mind, which ought to be fixed on the duties connected with them, and on his hopes of the other world.

The first duty, therefore, of faith is, plainly, to work a regard to God and to futurity into the framework of our minds: and it must be altogether unnecessary to prove that the most direct, and an indispensable method of doing this is by meditation and prayer, by studying, with the best helps in our power, both his works and his word: and especially that dispensation of both his truth and his goodness in Christ, by which we learn both to know him best, and to serve him most resolutely. In speaking of prayer, I here speak, of course, only of the principle. Wherever there is the acknowledgment of a Providence there must be prayer. Prayer, whether uttered in actual word, or not, is nothing else but that acknowledgment. That same acknowledgment, also, is prayer, and is moreover a practice which evidently renovates in the mind that

principle of faith from which it springs, and which might rust without it.

But is it not, we may still be asked, an absurdity to *pray* to a Being whose counsels, inasmuch as he is the immutable one, we do not and cannot hope to change? * I answer that it is no absurdity. Prayer, no less than praise, is a part of that spirit of religious devotion, with which we suppose God's providence, be it what it may, to consist. It is nothing more, or else, than one of those human analogies, by which, as the most intelligible which *we* can comprehend, *we* are taught to express *our* relation to God, a relation which, the moment we travel beyond the part which we ourselves bear in it, we do not pretend to comprehend or define.†

* See before, p. 192, *et seq.* "As to the stale objection, that the direct influence of prayer supposes that we can alter the divine determinations, it is sufficient to reply, that it is according to these determinations that men must seek in order to receive, and knock in order to the door being opened. God discloses to us the treasures of His grace, and says, 'I will yet for these be inquired of.'"—*Pearson on Infidelity*, pp. 116, 117.

† The able writer of a very recent work on the "Laws of Thought," a writer who will not be found to desert unnecessarily in any instance the literal interpretation of the Scripture doctrines, observes as follows on this subject in his last publication:—"And though God is not a man, to feel wrath, or the affections of love, or pity, or repentance, still we believe that these anthropomorphic representations are necessary for

All, therefore, which we mean, or properly can mean, by prayer, may be stated as follows. As a child prays to his father for reward or forgiveness, and this on the express or implied ground of affection or duty, so we also pray to God on the same ground. The child may probably think the father flexible by tears or entreaties. But from the analogy of religion we shut out all that as inapplicable. I do not mean that we shut out the tears, or that a rude mind shuts out the notion of there being flexibility even in God. But the instructed mind does not, on this account, the less see both that the father may decide wholly by what he may judge to be most conducive to the moral welfare of the child, and that God may also decide by the same rule. We assuredly dare not, so far as we are reasonable beings, to ask of Him either to remit punishment or to grant

the acceptance of the doctrine as a practical rule. It is not so much a question whether God can feel wrath, and if not what attribute of him it is that bears that earthly name, but whether we have something to fear from him, which, at least, would work tribulation and anguish in us, just as if wrath it were. Nor is it really so easy to separate in thought the change in our state from an apparent change in his."—*Thompson's Bampton Lecture Sermons for* 1853, p. 182; and again, p. 184:—"The most fastidious metaphysician should not grudge us the expressions that God was wrath, and is grace; that he was estranged from us, and is reconciled; because such words describe the true state of things from a practical point of view, because it is an innocent, a reverent, a consolatory mode of speaking."

blessing, except on the condition, or the presumption, or whatever other word our imperfect nomenclature may best adopt, that a moral change is, or is to be, worked in ourselves, which may put us on the footing of that law which he has laid down. Nor indeed, *in their theory*, did even the church penances go on any other principle. Nor is there anything whatever in any practice of outward demonstrations, recognized or unrecognized, which affects the case. For these owe all their importance to their necessity, or usefulness, in embodying, or expressing, the inward feeling, but are in themselves nothing.

To every one who has ever been habituated to reason on the operations of the mind, this statement must, I think, be sufficient. There may, however, be some persons to whom the case will be rendered clearer, if they will make the following supposition. Suppose that a child is told by his father that if he learns his lesson well he shall be rewarded, but if not, that he shall be punished. The child idles, and does not learn his lesson, but throws himself at his father's feet and entreats forgiveness, and the father is *mollified*, as would be said, and forgives.

In after years, when the child has grown up, and is become a good and an intelligent man, and in the most affectionate confidence of his most kind father, he recurs to this event. He asks his father how he, a just, and good, and sincere man, could have said one

thing, and yet have done another; how he could have threatened punishment, and yet remitted it. "Either you ought not have threatened, or you ought to have inflicted it." So it might be said. But the father might answer, that he had known very well beforehand what would happen. "I knew that it was requisite for you in that childish age to have the immediate motive of reward or punishment brought directly before you. I foresaw that you would be idle, but I knew also that the motive power would not be lost out of your mind, that your character would recover itself, that line upon line, and precept upon precept, would at length have their effect, an effect both the more durable, and of the more useful sort, if coupled with the production of a kindly and truly filial principle in the mind; that you would be grateful for forgiveness, and turn out well in the end."* We do not here suppose the son to ask in reply, "Why did you not explain all this to me at the time?" It was obviously unexplainable to the childish mind. It was necessary to express in the same clear way in which many things are often put down in writing which have to be erased afterwards, some direct, and it *might* almost be said tangible connection between the act and its consequences, and to use language which the recipient could understand; and this, moreover, is evidently the only

* Compare what was said before, chap. xiv. pp. 182, 183, *et seq.*

principle on which a holy and immutable God can possibly be spoken of as repentant and jealous, as denouncing sin and yet as pardoning the sinner, or indeed on which any revelation can possibly be made in human language to a being like man.*

The relation of a son to his father which has been here spoken of is that relation which most fully expresses the position of man in respect to God, and is, moreover, the relation which the pages of Scripture are most abundant in bringing before us. We cannot on the whole come nearer than this to the intelligence of our whole condition in regard to the Infinite One. It is little else in the case before us than a change of words to substitute the relation of a culprit to his judge. But let us make, for one moment, this substitution. Let us suppose that a wise and kind judge is himself administering a holy law which he has himself ordained. The law is unchangeable; the wiser, and on the whole the kinder the judge is, the more unchangeable. But his prerogative of pardon is not lost, nor his truth compromised by the exertion of it.

I may be permitted to add, that though the duty of prayer is thus seen to be a clear and most important duty, we are not bound with regard to the manner of rendering it. That manner ought always to depend upon the wants, the varying wants, of the minds for

* See note †, p. 276.

which we would prescribe, on the education, whether of reasoning or of sentiment, in which they have been trained, or on the impressions which may have been made, though only by the mere accessories of our religious education, on the religious feelings themselves. Much care, much more and better than is commonly taken, is doubtless requisite to prevent the minds of some from being hardened by vain repetitions, and to nourish in others the living habits of a useful devotion. But it is also of not less moment to be aware of what is at once the practical effect and the subordinate character of many of the differences on this subject, by which even good men are often divided, in respect of the methods which they adopt of offering praise or supplication to the invisible and incomprehensible Father of all. I do not mean to say that a truly good man ever attaches a properly pharisaical importance to rites or ceremonies. But yet many of these things are often invested with an importance which is at once very real, and yet only imaginative; and it therefore becomes us to be well aware that as they do not constitute in themselves that real worship in spirit and in truth which they may, nevertheless, under certain circumstances, tend to promote, we must be careful not to intrude them into its place. The splendour of a ritual, the pomp of a procession, or the melody of a hymn, may often, it is not to be denied,

possess a semi-mechanical effect in animating the devotion of a sincerely religious mind; and that man, as it seems to me, has not been happily or rationally educated, who can pass by without any feeling of awe, or impression of respect, those noble monuments of the piety, enlightened or unenlightened, of our ancestors, where the worship of the Almighty is seen to borrow aid even from the senses themselves;

> "Where white-robed priests the solemn chant prolong,
> And choirs divide, and organs swell the song."

Thus large, as it seems to me, the margin really is within which we may often be able, and feel thankful that we *are* able, to enlist the human and the earthly, and even the love of art, of learning, and of antiquity, in rendering duty to God, in throwing ourselves humbly before his footstool, and entreating pardon for our sins. But then we must be careful, as I have said, very careful, not to put any of these things, these mere words, as they may be called, for they can be nothing better, into the place of things, or into that of religion itself, nor identify them with the objects for which they stand, with repentance, or justice, or mercy, or faith.

Then again, also, if this error have at any time, as it too often has, been largely committed, and especially if any extensive superstition, to say nothing of

worse principles, have at any time unduly availed itself of the hold given to it by practices which, though innocent in their origin, and capable of useful appliance, have lost their utility, the case may be changed. Reason is universal. Its influence or operation on human affairs will not often, I believe, be active or forcible at any one time. In that sense* it is a weak power. But still, if dispossessed in any one age or country of its rightful authority, it will revive in another. So, also, in the case of religion. If God be denied in one age, or rather in any one infelicitous society, yet his truth, his wisdom, and his goodness will still shine forth and be acknowledged in another. But it is a rule of wide, if not of universal application, that when once a mere accessory has lost its hold of the mind, that hold is gone for ever. Once show clearly and confessedly the falsehood of a pretension, and then the authority which has been for a time conceded to it can scarcely be resumed under the same pretension. Once show that a ritual or a robe, though originally useful or innocent, has been made the instrument of corruption or tyranny, it can then no longer lend any aid, either little or much, to true devotion; and we must now, in order to recover the lost feeling, seek some access to God, of which the stream has not been diverted from its source.

* See what was said on this subject in p. 166.

Formularies, which we might otherwise have regarded as too rigid, may now, possibly, be the best fitted for our use; and we have the satisfaction of knowing that though forms, and language, and learning, and imagination, may and do, and were doubtless intended to, help us in our human estimate of the great facts set before us of the divine mercy and love, yet those great facts themselves are always the same, in whatever language recorded, or by whatever methods expressed. And so, also, may our human thankfulness for them be one and the same, if breathed forth in the same humility and sincerity, and in an equally resolute spirit of obedience.

But to return from this digression. Faith, it was seen, if it be real, must be followed by practice. Give the principle, and the practice follows. There is not, there cannot be, any gap between the two. A man cannot be fully persuaded that he has a good, and kind, and omnipotent master, and yet not desire to serve him. That desire is in itself the whole principle of prayer or devotion, of which the practice is nothing else but the expression. I have made all this, I think, quite clear. But it is no less certain that the practical details are not only the necessary evolution of the principle, but that they also react on it and tend to confirm it. We have not only, for example, to offer

up thanksgiving to God, because we are thankful to him, but also because our thankfulness will die off, unless we give it vent. Our case is not that we have a debt to pay, and when we have paid the sum due we have done with it, although to think thus may be better or less bad than to do nothing. But this is not the full meaning, or what may be called the philosophy, of the whole transaction. In the commerce which we have with our human friends it is not a wise or a happy habit of mind to abstain in the degree in which some people do abstain from expressing in words our feeling of kindliness for them. The words may be overdone, or may be suspicious; they often are both one and the other. But when they are dictated by a real gratitude and affection they are almost always a useful expression of that feeling, and confirm and nourish the spirit from which they flow. And so also in our relation to God, of whom, if we neglect the practice of everything which in the larger sense is prayer or devotion, we should almost cease to know the goodness which we confess. The mere acknowledgment that a Being exists in the highest heavens, and yet without meditating on, that is, not bringing habitually and humbly before our minds, the facts of what he has done for us, would be only like knowing that there had been a great poet, and yet forgetting all the harmony of his verse.

Thus far, therefore, the effect of faith is devotion, is the spiritual reference of the faithful principle, which has been nurtured up in us, to its great author, object, and end. Next to devotion, and, indeed, often prior to it in point of time, and altogether inalienably from all truly acceptable devotion, comes virtue.* To *be* good we must *do* good. Every eulogium of, or exhortation to cultivate, a spiritual religion, unless as directly connected, and even identified, with the acts to which it impels, if it do not operate as a temptation to vice, must yet tend to make people indifferent to practical virtue. This useful truth might be often wisely reiterated in the ears of many men of kindly dispositions, who yet do not *do* the good of which they approve. *Christ did it.* And the same truth might then be followed up or reciprocated with this other. "But you will not do it without faith." I do not

* Thus Butler observes in the first part of his Analogy, chap. v. pp. 149–151, that a course of active virtue and obedience to God's will has a tendency to moderate distorting affections, and to form within ourselves the temper of resignation to God's rightful authority. He adds, that "we experience that what we were to be was to be the effect of *what we would do*, and that the general conduct of nature is not to save us trouble or danger, but to make us capable of going through them, and to put it upon us to do so. Acquirements of our own, experience, and habits, are the natural supply to our deficiencies, and security against our dangers," and so forth.

say absolutely without faith in Christ; there is faith in God, in the eternal, the invisible, the all wise, the all powerful, the all good. But then faith in Christ is the best-informed, the most consolatory, and the most inspiriting of any which we have.

CHAPTER XX.

In the second place, of the practice required by our duty to man, or by the love of our neighbour, and of its reaction.

THAT the love of our neighbour is among the most indispensable duties of all true religion, or of religious faith, need not be proved. Prayer and devotion are, of course, as was shown in the last chapter, the most direct, but still cannot be said to be the more important or necessary, issues of this principle. However intertwined also or connected these two classes of duties are with each other, and though religion is the surest basis of them both, it is not to be forgotten that they are still two classes, and not to be resolved into, or included in one. On these two commandments, as we are told in the most philosophical as well as the most impressive of all the lessons of human duty ever given, hang all the law and the prophets. The love of God is the desire to please him and do his will, a desire grounded, and which can only be grounded, in the belief of his goodness and mercy. Out of this

desire springs, doubtless, or may spring, the love of of man for man's own sake, or the desire to do him good, or promote his happiness, that we may be so workers together with God* in his own great work, and obey his commands. But though this be so; or though, when the principle of love to God is once formed in the heart, we may be, and naturally are, led by it to the love of man, because God requires it of us; yet the love of man is still much more than, and indeed is often independent of, that principle of love divine which may thus be its source. In fact, also, human love is nothing less than the actual root out of which the principle of divine love grows up in the heart. "He that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"† And even if there were no God, or no belief in him, the love of man would still be a duty. It is a flame which would still be lit up in the heart by all those human connections and interests which light it up now; and the voice of conscience would, in all but the most degraded states of existence, remonstrate loudly against our being insensible to it.

But though the principles themselves are thus clearly distinct, there is not any sound mind in which they do not co-operate. I will not deny a tribute of respect to the most enthusiastic religionist, who ever really

* 2 Cor. vi. 1. † 1 John iv. 20.

subjugates himself to the dominion of principle. Though he dry up the founts of natural feeling, or seclude himself from the discharge of human duties, yet if he do this not to swell his own personal pride, but as some, doubtless, have done it, in conscious humility, and in the belief that he so devotes himself most acceptably to the service of his Creator and Saviour, that God who knows always a true servant, will not reject the service which he offers, because the rule is a crooked rule by which he has shaped it.

But still the rule *is* crooked, and in the extreme. Unless we join the service of man to the worship of God, we do not really do to God the service which he requires, and we do not nourish in our minds the sentiments which he lays hold of as the material out of which arises our devotion to Him. There exist a thousand clear proofs of the great strength which the religious principle has in itself. The martyrdom which the ascetic inflicts on his own body is one proof among many of the dominion which this principle may have over the mind, and ought to have over it. But if he seclude himself from the exercise of human affections and human duties, he cannot really acquire the affections, or do the duties, which a sound religion requires. He cannot be like Christ. He cannot, unless the principle of love be brought into existence by actual communication with human parents or human friends,

convert that principle or any of its results, as he ought to do, to a higher object. So also with regard to the discharge of his duties to society, at the root of all of which the principle of love is also to be found; and he is nearly in the condition of the many who say, and say hypocritically, though not always with conscious hypocrisy, "Be thou warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body."* The mere theory, how correct soever, of either what God has done, or what Christ has done for us, cannot of itself do more for practical piety, than any mere theory of storms and tempests can enable a man to contend successfully with them when at sea. Wherefore the *reaction* on the sentiment of religion produced by the discharge of the duties to society which God prescribes, becomes not less necessary than direct prayer, or direct devotion, to the healthy action of religion itself. We thus, and thus only, learn to be actually sensible that there is a real analogy between the goodness or kindness which God has towards us, and that which we ourselves feel for each other. And this reaction will also be the greater, the more certain, and the more devout, if the conceptions which we form to ourselves of what our duties to society really are, be formed on the right principle, namely, that of estimating its reli-

* James ii. 16.

gious benefit as the greatest benefit which it can receive. But then it must be really religious. A misguided zeal may make some men adopt, instead of religion, false principles, or mischievous forms; and worse men, though these I hope, are rare, may use it as a mere cloak of iniquity. But if the philanthropist can make his fellow-men more true, more steady in their devotion to God's real will, or more really thankful for his mercy in Christ, than they would otherwise be, he thus does them more good, and makes them also the doers in their turn of much more, than in any other way whatsoever. No one entertains a doubt but that every good man, or rather every man who really does good, gets a recompense in the strengthening of his own mind by what he does. But if he lift up a moral being to a life of duty to God, or rescue him from vice, nothing else will confirm the habit of his own Faith so much as that. It will not, I trust, be inferred from anything which I have thus said of the importance, and indeed moral necessity, of *action*, that I exclude from the character of active work that in which the mind works on itself. No virtue was ever more really active than that which produced the Principia. Nor, probably, was there ever any one work of the human understanding which can have done more, if so much, to confirm the religious principle of a great mind than that serene and sincere and majestic conclusion which the illustrious author has himself shown

us in the noble peroration of his accomplished labour that he had himself reaped from it. We have also to observe that all these works, or works such as these, few as they must always necessarily be, can only be exceptions to that general principle of the religious life, that the love of God is best shown, and our duty to him best performed, not in the great things of this mortal world, but rather in its little things; in those daily and hourly communications of common life with common minds, with the poor, the erring, or the afflicted, in which we may hope to raise their virtues, or correct their faults, to show them that we are both desirous to improve their earthly condition, and to lift their minds to heaven; that we account them of the same blood with ourselves, and are earnest to bring them to the same Saviour. No Newton, no Paul, can ever do more real good, if so much, either to himself or others, as in his humilities; in turning himself from any region of loftier pretension in which it may have been his province or duty to walk, in order to strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, of an ignorant or misguided neighbour or friend.

Thus much of the love of man, and of active labour, as a duty prescribed by religion, and not less indispensable to its right practice than direct prayer or devotion.

I have now to add, secondly, that, abstracting all considerations of religion, the love of man is a duty

also. In no state of society whatever, excepting only the lowest and the most degraded, if indeed that be an exception, does the conscience fail to approve the kindly motives and practice, and to pass its censure on the cruel, or the base; and this often without any reference whatever to the religious sentiment, or to the will or being of God. This proof is sufficient. Conscience, however brought into action, makes duty, solely and of itself; and we then go on to the further inference, that if love be a duty, it is also a duty to regulate it, to be careful that no passion or predilection be allowed to obstruct the good of the whole; and that no vague dreams or imaginations interfere with our actually *doing* the real good within our reach. On the principle of considering the religious good of mankind as their greatest good,* I may, moreover, add, that this principle operates often, and I suppose, to a great extent, among men whose own actual religious susceptibilities are exceedingly weak and inadequate. There are many persons in whom the mere humanities and amiablenesses of their condition, or their connections, have awakened a sense of duty to society, which constitutes in reality a far more real and powerful impulse in all they do, than their sense of religion; and these persons will often exert themselves in a greater or a less degree, to promote the

* See what was said on this subject in pp. 292, 293.

diffusion of religion, though chiefly with only this human object in view. They think religion a very good thing for the public, though they have but little of it themselves. This clearly is not a very high or exalted sense of religion. But then here also comes, or may come, a religious reaction. If, for instance, a man of this sort enter the cottage of the labourer whom he has reclaimed from drunkenness, and induced to work for his family, and brought to the worship of God, he will thus, while he advances and perfects the good which he has done for the object of his benevolence, do also much for himself. It is hardly possible that, in such a case as this, the action shall not be reflected on the agent, if he be but sincere, or that his own mind shall not be opened to the good influences, which he has endeavoured, though at first with languid views of their supreme importance, to impart to another. This is one example. Take as another, the case of a *Judge*. He *must*, it is a part of his trade to charge his jury on a religious principle, whether he himself have any personal religion or not. But unless he has a very unusual, and we may say unnatural insensibility on the subject, he cannot say anything which shall make an impression on the jury, and yet make none on himself. Take the case of a parent who has brought back an unthinking son to a prudent life. He can hardly do this without

confirming his own principles if in any degree vacillating, by so doing. Or take a tradesman, whose main object of life is to get money, but to get it honestly. The honest action into which he is so led confirms the principle in which it originates, and makes him a better man than before.

Thus universal, I suppose, is the reaction on the agent of all the good which his good principle leads him to do (and it might also be shown conversely that corresponding evils are inflicted by the reactions of vice). But to speak here of our virtues only: it has been sufficiently shown, that the practice of every virtue confirms both the faith in God, and the love of man, from which they issue, and this the more, whenever the production of that faith and love is adequately recognised and impressed on the mind as the most valuable fruit which they can bear. "Nor is this to be wondered at," as one of the most acute and able of all teachers has justly observed, "inasmuch as the true philosophy of morals is but the handmaid of theology, and nothing else." *

* "Nec mirum, cum moralis philosophia vera et genuina ancillæ tantum vices erga theologiam supplet."—*De Augm.* VII. iii. The whole reaction of practice on principle can scarcely be anywhere better stated than in a preceding paragraph of the same chapter. "Pervenimus nunc ad illa quæ in nostrâ sunt potestate, quæque operantur in animum, voluntatemque et appetitum afficiunt et circumagunt, ideoque ad immutandos

In the division or classification of human duties, it is not uncommon to award a separate consideration to the duties which a man may be said to owe to *himself*. At first sight also, there is no doubt good ground for making this division. No duties can be of greater importance than the class of duties thus distinguished. No error can be greater than to imagine that the exercise of a sentimental benevolence, or of either a formal or an impassioned devotion to God, can ever rank as either an apology or a compensation for neglecting or violating any of those practical duties of the moral law, which are bound on us personally by the divine authority. And yet it is an error often committed. Over and above the vicious superstition which substitutes a zeal for forms and opinions in the place both of sincere faith, and of the true goodness which a really sincere faith always produces, that willing blindness to the truth of which I have spoken already will often induce a man to choose the easy

mores plurimum valent. Quâ in parte debuerant Philosophi strenue et graviter inquirere, de viribus et energiâ consuetudinis, æmulationis, convictus, amicitiæ, laudis, reprehensionis, exhortationis, famæ, legum, librorum, studiorum, et si qua sunt alia. Hæc enim sunt illa quæ regnant in moralibus : ab istis agentibus animus patitur et disponitur ; ab istis veluti ingredientibus conficiuntur pharmaca, quæ ad conservandam et recuperandam animi sanitatem conducant, quatenus remediis humanis id præstari possit."

path of life instead of the straight path. There are very many persons who are much more willing to speculate on the doing good to others, or indeed to make this their real end, than to reform themselves. The man who falls into this error is vain and wrong, and, in the full and exact sense of the word, hypocritical. Society itself can scarcely ever really benefit by such a man as this. The precept "Physician, heal thyself," is a precept lost on him, and he never can be the faithful servant of the self-denying Master by whose name he is called. For this reason a rule directly and clearly opposed to this great error, or the rule that a man's first business is to take care of himself, may not at first sight seem to be uncalled for or injudicious. Yet if we allow ourselves to look but a very little further into the case, we shall plainly see that this rule, grave as the mistake is which may have given occasion for it, is not either a just rule, or a liberal rule, unless expanded by a very large estimate of the whole matter. So far, doubtless, is true, that a man's first duty both to God and to society, is to be temperate, and pure, and holy himself. No false or feeble conception of either benevolence or utility ought ever to tempt him to pass the boundaries by which his own path is hedged in, under the notion that he may, or can, make up for this irregularity by any active energy or amiableness even of virtue itself, either in

the public or the private departments of life. Our first practical duties, therefore, are beyond all doubt, our duties to ourselves. These are the duties which are prescribed the most imperatively both by the principle of obedience to God, and of benevolence to man; they rank directly and inclusively under these two heads, and are the most indispensable of any. But still, though thus the most indispensable of our duties, they are far from being the noblest. It is better, no doubt, for a man personally to be pure, and gentle, and innocent, and sober, than to be licentious, and coarse, and intemperate; and God in dealing with his creatures does not lift any of them above the necessity of being sometimes recalled to the observance of the rules which he has given them by the fear of the punishment attached to its breach. But it is best to found our prudent care of our own selves, whenever we can, on the gratitude which we owe to the great Being who has required it of us, rather than on only our own interests. And so also with regard to man. It is better to be restrained from oppression, or injury, by the fear of personal consequences, than not to be restrained. But love only is, or can be, the fulfilling of the law, and is the only principle which leads or teaches us not to be contented with merely keeping to the path prescribed, but to advance in it also; to turn a duty which we acknowledge into a pleasure which we

feel; to give to the wisdom and power, and the goodness which we see in creation, their natural effect of raising our affections to the Creator whom they proclaim; and to love man both for his Maker's sake, and for his own.

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